This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

15482.20.4

Bound

FEB 21 1907

Harvard College Library

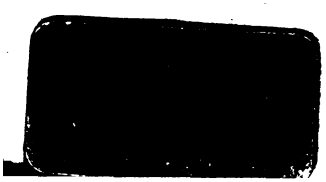
FROM THE GIFT OF

ERNEST BLANEY DANE

(Class of 1892)

OF BOSTON

FOR ENGLISH LITERATURE



B

15 X 82 .20. 4

WOMAN IS A RIDDLE.

A COMEDY.

As it is Acted at the

Theatre in *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields.*

By Mr. Christopher Bullock.

—Varium & Mutabile ſemper Fæmina.

Virg.

For 'tis in vain to think to gueſs
At Woman by Appearances.

Hud.

The Second Edition.

LONDON:

Printed for A. Bettesworth, in *Pater-Noſter-Row*; W. Mears, without *Temple-Bar*; T. Woodward, in *Fleet-ſtreet.*

M.dcc.xxix.

15482.20.4

HARVARD COLLEGE
DEC 14 1906
LIBRARY.

To the MOST NOBLE

PHILIP,

Marquis of Wharton and Catherlagh,

Earl of WHARTON and RATHFARNAM,

Viſcount *WINCHEADON,*

And Baron of *Wharton* and *Trim.*

MY LORD,

THE Permiſſion of this Addreſs to Your Lordſhip, from ſo young an Author, and one of ſo mean a Rank, is an Honour I could only have expected from Your Lordſhip's Condeſcenſion and Good Nature.

TITLES cannot ſo well diſtinguiſh a NOBLEMAN, as a Propenſity to *Great Actions*;

and *Great Actions* ever ſhew themſelves to beſt Advantage, from the Objects on which employ'd; and that it is peculiar to Your Lordſhip's Character, that You ſet no greater a Value on the *Goods of Fortune*, than as they may be render'd conducive to the Happineſs of that Part of Mankind, over which *Providence* has happily plac'd your Lordſhip; and can look down with a Face of Good Nature on the meaneſt Attempts, the *Honour* You have done me in taking this Comedy under Your Patronage, will demonſtrate to the World.

I had no Deſert by which to pretend to Your Lordſhip's Favour, but you firſt by Your *Generoſity* emboldened me to throw this *Trifle* at your *Feet*, and then indulg'd me in my Requeſt, by an obliging Willingneſs of becoming my Patron.

It were an Impudence in me to pretend to the Praiſe of Your Lordſhip's Virtues; and it is a *Theme* I doubt not will employ ſome *Pens* of the greateſt Reputation; I ſhall rather chooſe to follow the Judicious Examples of that *Great Painter*, who wiſely drew a *Veil* over thoſe *Beauties* he was conſcious he wanted *Art* to imitate, than to incur the Guilt of derogating from Your many and great Accompliſhments, by my want of Skill to conduct me in ſuch an Undertaking; ſo I ſhall

ſhall content my ſelf, with ſilently admiring thoſe Perfections in Your Lordſhip, which I freely own I have not a Capacity to deſcribe: The Height of my Ambition is this Liberty of confeſſing my Obligations to Your Lordſhip, and of ſubſcribing my ſelf,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's much oblig'd,

and obedient humble Servant,

Christopher Bullock.

PRO-

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. ELRINGTON.

IT and You Critics have, in ev'-
[ry Age,
Maintain'd hot Wars with ſtill
[unwearied Rage:
The Quarrel might, perhaps, be
[grounded right,
And only Falſe Wit did your Spleens excite:
Thus was your Anger juſt, and its Effect
Good Sence t'eſtabliſh and bad Taſtes correct:
But now you judge from Paſſion, not from
[Reaſon;
All Wit's thought Factious, and all Satyr—
[Treaſon.
To what ſad End the Bard muſt rack his
[Brain,
Whilſt you'll firſt damn his Words, and then—
[explain.
Action and Art are loſt, when Cenſure's Sword
Is ready out, and certain Death's the Word.
Our Author for himſelf all Fears diſclaims,
Since he alone at your Diverſion aims;
And counts it Merit, if he can but move
His Pit by Laughter his poor Scenes t'approve;

But

But mourns the ingen'rous Jealouſie of Spleen,
That wreſts to vile Conſtruction th' harmleſs
[*Scene.*

Be juſt at leaſt, if you will not be kind,
Arraign us not for Things we ne'er deſign'd:
'Tis hard beneath a double Load to bow;
O be not Partial and Invet'rate too!—
Swoln with Succeſs, and in Opinion high,
Our Rivals all our weak Efforts defie;
And Laugh to ſee us toil and heave in vain,
Like Siſyphus, *a Stone which backwards falls*
[*again.*

Sure we are ſeated on Enchanted Ground.
And nought can proſper 'till the Charm's un-
[*bound:*
If Prejudice the fatal Magick be,
Your Smiles may looſe that Charm, and ſet us
[*free!*
Let not thoſe poor forſaken Benches ſhow
Like Fairy Rings on which no Graſs will grow:
Divide your Favours with an equal Hand,
We'll ſtrive to prize 'em, tho' we can't com-
[*mand.*
If then our Stage your gen'rous Pity raiſe,
The leſs our Merit is, the more your Praiſe.

Dramatis

Dramatis Perſonæ.

MEN.

Colonel Manly; *a Gentleman of Fortune*, — *Mr.* Leigh.
Charles Courtwell; *a Younger Brother of a ſmall Fortune*, — *Mr.* Elrington.
Sir Amorous Vainwit; *a Boaſting Pedantick Fop of a large Eſtate*, — *Mr.* Bullock *Jun.*
Mr. Vulture; *an Old Rich Litigious* Stock-Jobber, — *Mr.* Bullock *Sen.*
Aſpin; *Servant to Colonel* Manly, — *Mr.* Spiller.
Butler; — *Mr.* Ogden.
Servant; — *Mr.* Eaton.

WOMEN.

Lady Outſide; *a Rich Young Widow*, *Mrs.* Rogers.
Miranda; Courtwell's *Siſter, a Young Lady of a good Fortune*, — *Mrs.* Croſs.
Clarinda; *a Gentlewoman of a good Family, debauch'd by Sir* Amorous, — *Mrs.* Spiller.
Neceſſary; *the Widow's Chamber-maid*, — *Mrs.* Elſom.
Betty; Clarinda's *Maid*.

Chairmen.

SCENE, *LONDON*.

Time of Action, from Four of the Clock in the Afternoon, till Eleven at Night.

WOMAN IS A RIDDLE.

ACT I. SCENE *a Chamber.*

Enter Colonel Manly, *and his Man* Aſpin. *The Colonel peruſing a Letter.*

Col. Man. THERE is ſomething in the Adventure of this Lady ſo very unaccountable, (ev'n beyond the natural Extravagance of her Sex) that I am not able to gueſs what ſhe deſigns, or what ſhe ſhou'd be.

Aſpin. Why, Sir, according to my ſhallow Underſtanding, her Deſign muſt be upon your Perſon; but what ſhe is, I cannot poſſibly find out; but do firmly believe 'tis ſome Fairy or other, who has taken a Liking to you.—Why, you laugh now, Maſter, but upon my Soul I have not reſted one Night in quiet ſince this Thought came into my Head.

Col. Man. Away with theſe fooliſh Chimæra's.

Aſp.

Asp. Why, Sir, you are as unbelieving as a Jew.—I am certain I was not deceiv'd last Night; for peeping thro' the Key-hole of the Door, I saw this same Spirit that is in Love with you, and a hopeful Attendance with her; but I own I had not the Courage to go in and keep 'em Company.

Man. And cou'd not you see where they went out?

Asp. See where they went out! Why, no doubt they vanish'd, according to their usual Custom; but let 'em go where they will, I'm sure I was so frighted, that as I stood at th' Top of the Stairs, my Fear let me tumble to the Bottom.

Man. It shall go very hard but I'll discover her.—It certainly must be she that I have met three or four times in the Park; the Stile of her Letters is so like the Discourse of that witty Creature—Well, if it be she, and the Beauty of her Face comes up to that of her Shape, her Mien, her lilly Hands and snowy Bosom, I shall run distracted for her.

Asp. That's more than I shall do for her Ladyship's Attendant; besides I don't like this Correspondence with Fairies, my Conscience utterly disapproves of such diabolical Proceedings.

Man. Your Fear, you mean: You'll be very fit to follow me to a Camp if there shou'd be Occasion.

Asp. O dear Sir, by no means. My Talent (I thank you) lies all to Civil Employments; I'll leave the Part of having ones Throat cut to such noble Gentlemen as you are—But for this Spirit, Sir, since you are so arm'd with Resolution, why don't you speak to it?

Man. Why, Sirrah, when I found a Letter upon my Table th' other Day, in which she commanded me to leave an Answer in the same Place, did not I watch a whole Day and Night to see her? And when I despair'd of her Appearance, and stept into the next Room for half a quarter of an Hour, was not my Letter gone at my Return?

Enter Courtwell.

Ha! *Charles Courtwell!* the very Man I was wishing for; I have the most whimsical Adventure to acquaint you with—

Court.

Court. Colonel *Manly*, your Servant: Four o' Clock, and not yet dreſt? Why, 'tis a Miracle to meet with you at Home at this Hour.

Man. Faith I find ſo little good Company abroad, that there's no Temptation.

Court. But I preſume, you have had ſome at Home that has kept you in your Bed ſo late.

Man. No faith, 'twas a Debauch that I made laſt Night, which kept me out of it till Seven this Morning: I have as many Qualms, as a young breeding Woman.

Court. O! you ſhou'd drive out one Debauch with another; you'll not be your ſelf till you're warm with the ſame Sport: What ſay you, will you make one to a Bowl of Rack-Punch at *Charing-Croſs*.

Man. No, faith, I can't approve of your Cure for a Drunken Sickneſs.

Court. If you are not diſpos'd for Drinking, will you go to the Playhouſe, there's a new Comedy to be acted to Night?

Man. I nauſeate the Place; 'tis become worſe of late than a Coffee-Houſe: The Rage of Party is ſo Predominant, that ev'n publick Diverſion is interrupted, and 'tis impoſſible to ſit out a Play with any Satisfaction, for the ridiculous Comments which a Man is oblig'd to hear from the Politicians in the Pit.

Court. That is a publick Grievance indeed, and not to be redreſs'd, but by a general Conſent of the Perſons who frequent the Theatres, by reſolving to go only for their Diverſion, without the poor Satisfaction of indulging their Spleen.

Man. In ſhort, the old Plays are ſo curtail'd for fear of giving Offence to Parties, that if *Shakeſpear*, *Fletcher*, and *Johnſon* were alive, they'd hardly believe their Productions legitimate; and for New Plays, there can be none worth ſeeing, ſince the Viciouſneſs of the Age has beat out Satyr's *tripple* row of Teeth by a kind of general Conſent.

Court. But I muſt tell you, I think you wrong the modern Bards; there are Fools expos'd in moſt of our new Plays.

Man. Ay, I grant you they may be free with the Character of a Fool, for no Man will take that to himſelf; the greateſt Coxcomb that ever was, believ'd himſelf a Wit; but for Knaves, who dare meddle with them in this Age. In ſhort, the World is become ſo wicked, that 'tis almoſt Criminal to ſpeak againſt Knavery, and you can hardly laſh a Vice, without creating a potent Enemy.

Court. The mercenary Temper of the Poets has not a little conduc'd to the Prohibition of a Satyr.

Man. True; we have not a *Wycherly* now, no Plain-Dealer left in the Tribe, they drop the Deſign of Comedy, with the publick Good, for their private Intereſts; and Fear, or Gain, or both, make 'em rather countenance, than laſh the Vices of the Age; they ſtudy nothing now, but to advance the Profits of the Third Day, ſo lard their Plays with Party Invectives, and by ſeverely railing at one Side, get their abominable Stuff ſupported by the Intereſt of the other.

Court. Well, I perceive you are no ways diſpos'd for any Diverſion to Night, ſo I'll leave you to your Meditations.

Man. No, you ſhan't go yet.

Court. O, I had forgot; Prithee what's the Adventure you have to acquaint me with?

Man. I'll tell you —— You muſt know I have an inviſible Miſtreſs, a Thing of Air, that conjures itſelf thro' the Keyhole of my Door, leaves Letters for me upon the Table, and returns for their Anſwers.

Court. This is ſurprizing indeed.

Man. Faith 'tis true, tho' —— I have left a Letter upon the Table in this very Room, lock'd the Door, taken the Key in my own Pocket, went out, return'd in half an Hour, my Letter has been gone, and another, by way of Reply, left in its Place. There's the laſt, prithee read it.

Court. (reads) *Colonel, You are very importunate to know who I am, and by what Power I converſe with you thus: Be ſatisfy'd, I am worth the knowing, but will not diſcover my ſelf. Love is the Power by which I move, and I take a Pleaſure*

in

in puzzling them I have the greateſt Value for. Set Invention to work, for I am a Riddle, expound me, and take me.

This is the moſt romantick Adventure I ever heard of.

Man. So you wou'd ſay indeed, did you know all — She *is* acquainted with all my Affairs, even my moſt ſecret; nay, ſhe has intimated her Knowledge of a Diſcourſe that happen'd only betwixt you and I, when you propos'd your Siſter to me, and which you enjoin'd me particularly to keep a Secret: In theſe Affairs ſhe is extravagantly ſurprizing; that damn'd impertinent Vice, *Curioſity*, which ruin'd the firſt Woman, has fruitfully ſpread itſelf thro' the whole Sex, to the Interruption of many a charming Intrigue, and more particularly actuates this little Fairy, this thing of Air, which haunts me; for I have not had an Affair with any Woman this Month, tho' never ſo ſecretly managed, but ſhe has diſcover'd; for my part, I believe ſhe deals with the Devil.

Aſp. Now, Maſter, I am inclin'd to believe 'tis the Devil himſelf; the rather, becauſe he wears Petticoats, and chooſes the Shape of a Woman, the eaſier to compaſs the Ruin of a Man; beſides, 'tis a Form that beſt agrees with his Infernal Qualities; for I have often heard married Men affirm, That a Woman has ſo much of the Devil in her Nature, that ſometimes 'twou'd puzzle a Conjurer to diſtinguiſh one from t'other.

Man. Your Aſſurance his ill-tim'd——What evil Converſation has corrupted your Manners? [*Exit* Aſpin.

Court. Aſpin approves of a modern Axiom, a Man had better loſe his Friend than his Jeſt — You may obſerve by his Sentiments how apt we are to imitate our Superiors: The very Footmen grow prophane, and Senſe is ſo much miſtaken in theſe Days, that Religion and Matrimony are the common Topicks for the Raillery of our modern Wits, Lewdneſs being the diſtinguiſhing Mark of a fine Gentleman, and Atheiſm of a Wit.

Man. This Humour ſpreads itſelf too much — But as only foul Stomachs corrupt wholeſome Food, ſo weak Underſtanding only receive the Infection ——Ignorance is the rank Soil which produces the Weeds of Atheiſm

and Obſcenity; but a Man of true Senſe dares be modeſt and religious, notwithſtanding the Tyranny of Cuſtom.

Court. Cuſtom indeed is the greateſt Enemy to Truth; ſhe has made ſuch a Similitude between Wiſdom and Folly, they are hardly to be diſtinguiſh'd, and very often miſtaken one for the other.

Man. Eſpecially in our modern Converſation, where the height of Wiſdom conſiſts in expoſing the Imperfections of Mankind, and Rudeneſs and Ill-Nature paſs for Underſtanding.

Court. Well, 'tis pity Raillery ever ſhou'd be accepted for Wit.

Man. Which it will be, as long as Ill-Nature pleaſes every Body but the Perſon 'tis aim'd at.

Court. I am ſurpriz'd that the Vice or Folly of a Man ſhou'd contribute to the Pleaſure of his Fellow-Creatures.

Man. Theſe Philoſophical Sentiments will never recommend us to the Ladies——If you deſign the Acquiſition of their Favours, you muſt comply with the Mode, make your Wit a Pimp to your Pleaſure, your Reaſon a Servant to your Intereſt; flatter the Perſon you have a Deſign upon, be ſatyrically rude to the reſt of her Company, and exquiſitely ſcurrilous upon her abſent Acquaintance; Scandal and Tea are a fine Woman's Nouriſhment. But this is a Leſſon you are not to learn; and now we talk of a fine Woman, how goes the Widow and thee on?

Court. Why, faith, like Man and Wife, continually quarrelling; but I have at laſt found her to be a very Woman.

Man. How mean you?

Court. She makes an Aſs of every Lover ſhe has, and don't know her own Mind half an Hour together; conſtant in nothing; her Vanity is intolerable; ſhe has ſuch an Opinion of her Beauty, ſhe believes every Man that ſees her is languiſhing; and notwithſtanding her Vow againſt Matrimony, 'tis her greateſt Ambition to have a Crowd of Admirers; ſhe has Servants of all Sorts, and all Degrees, from the Nobleman to the Mechanick; from the Beau to the Ruſtick; from the Rake to the Uſurer; from the gay

gay airy Fop of Twenty-one, to the ſupercilious Fanatick of Fifty-two; and from a red Coat and a Feather, to a japan'd Cane and a bruſh'd Beaver——In ſhort, ſhe has more Lovers than a pretty Wench in an Univerſity.

Man. I find the Widow has as many Worſhippers as the Aſs that carry'd the *Egyptian* Goddeſs, when many bow'd their Knees not to the Beaſt but to the Burden.

Court. Your Compariſon is ſomewhat impolite.

Man. But apt and reaſonable, Faith *Charles*: a free Jointure is the moſt attractive Grace in a Widow. I grant you may in the height of your Paſſion, ſay a world of fine Things of the Woman; but believe me, you amorous Waſps that make ſuch Muſick about the Gally-pot, come only for the Honey that's in't: But is it poſſible thou can'ſt have a real Paſſion for the Widow?

Court. Why not? She has Youth and Good-Nature, and her Beauty is able to ſoften the moſt obdurate Heart.

Man. Thy Heart, *Courtwell*, is like a Looking-Glaſs, it preſently receives the Image of what is repreſented before it, and as ſoon loſes it; But you have a very powerful Rival that you don't know of yet, Sir *Amorous Vainwit*.

Court. I have ſeen the Gentleman, but have no Acquaintance with him. What Sort of a Spark is he?

Man. A Fellow that makes Intrigues the greateſt Buſineſs of his Life; he's a Romance in *Folio*, compos'd of a thouſand comical Adventures and pleaſant Intrigues, which he vouches all to be his own. He has one Vice I greatly diſlike; he will boaſt of Favours receiv'd from the firſt Women of Quality, when I am ſure the Rogue never had an Affair with any thing above his Laundreſs's Daughter, a Chamber-Maid, or a Citizen's Wife.

Enter Aſpin.

Aſp. Sir *Amorous Vainwit's* Chariot is at the Door; will your Honour be pleas'd to be within?

Man. Yes: Wait on him up. This worthy Knight will promiſe as much as a Courtier, and perform as little; when you are out of his Sight you are out of his Memory: He ſpeaks ill of no Man to his Face, nor well of any behind their Backs, and is even vexatiouſly kind,

with his Complements and external Civilities: He is often affronted, but never out of Humour; nay, I have known him tread upon a Man's Toes, on purpoſe to ſhew his Talent in asking Pardon: He is wond'rous fond of obſolete Words; I have known him compliment a Lady in the Terms of Chymiſtry and Fortification; his Converſation is meer Pedantry; he's full as ridiculous, and more unintelligible than a Quack-Phyſician.

Court. This is a very whimſical Character, and maliciouſly witty. Is he learned?

Man. Yes, as a *French* Taylor, in nothing but the Faſhions.

Court. Of what Family is he?

Man. He was the Son of a Mercer; his Father was a good indulgent Man, and ſtrove to make him (what Nature never deſign'd) a Scholar, and a Man of Parts: He put him early to the Univerſity, where he ſtaid three Years to ſmall purpoſe; from thence he was tranſplanted to one of our Collegiate Inns of Common Law, where he ſoon grew lawleſs, and unlearn'd his former little: But a Relation dying, and leaving a good Eſtate, he endeavour'd to improve himſelf, by ſeeing Foreign Places, ſo at once travell'd from his Country and himſelf, made the Tour of *France*, and is now return'd a very accompliſh'd Aſs.

Court. Did he bring Home nothing?

Man. Yes, abundance of miſ-ſhap'd Cloaths, and the Vices of the Country.

Enter Sir Amorous *(laughing.)*

Sir Amo. Oh, *Manly!* I have almoſt burſt my Sides with laughing. Ha, ha, ha!—Such an Adventure!—Ha, ha, ha!

Man. What's the Occaſion of this Exceſs of Mirth?

Sir Amo. Occaſion! Ha, ha, if ever there was greater Occaſion, may I be—Ha! who's that? Mr. *Courtwell* here!—Now may Convulſions ſeize and excruciate my Optick Nerves if I ſaw him before—O Stupidity unparallel'd, incongruous to all Senſe and Breeding; 'ſdeath, I have inadvertently and precipitately illaqueated my ſelf in an irrecoverable Confuſion—I am totally debilitated of all Power of Elocution, utterly incapable to excogi-

ate

ate an Apology of Efficacy, to abrogate his Cenſure of my Ruſticity.

Maw. Sir *Amorous*, won't you ſpeak to Mr. *Courtwell*.

Sir Amo. Sir, I beg ten thouſand Pardons for my abrupt entring the Room, deviating from the Rules of polite Breeding, and erroneouſly neglecting the juſt Oeconomy of good Behaviour; and can only hope to expiate the Guilt of my Inadvertency, by an Aſſeveration of a ſpontanous Contrition. I categorically bluſh to think how agretical I have been;——but the Faculties of my Soul were ſo dilated with the Novelty of my Adventure, that I unavoidably fell into this exorbitant and exuvious Eflux of Laughter, committing a Soliciſm of this Magnitude in good Manners.

Court. Sir, your good Manners give you too much trouble.

Sir Amo. Prithee, *Manly*, introduce me to Mr. *Courtwell*; I long to be acquainted with him, Dem me.—

Man. Can't you introduce your ſelf, Sir.

Sir Amo. No, this Surprize has put me quite out of Countenance.

Man. That's a Miracle——Mr. *Courtwell*, this is Sir *Amorous Vainwit*, my particular Friend, and a Gentleman that has long had an Ambition to be known to you.

Sir Amo. Sir, I ſhou'd think my ſelf much honour'd to be rank'd in the Number of your Acquaintance.

Court. To add one to the Number of my Friends, you are welcome, Sir.

Sir Amo. Sir, you do me too much Honour.

Man. But Sir *Amorous*, what Adventure is this you are ſo full of? Come, unlade, unlade.

Sir Amo. What! before Mr. *Courtwell*?

Man. Ay, ay, he's one of us, you may ſpeak before him.

Sir Amo. May I—Why then I will——You know we Wits ought to be free before one another——There's *Charles Lackwit*, a pretty adroit Fellow, faith; very alert, and behaves well, when he and I meet at *Button's*, we are the moſt facetious Company in the Univerſe; egad we make Wit a perfect Tennis-Ball, bandy it from one to th' other. Why could you think it?—We have laugh'd

laugh'd at one another for three Hours together——As for my part, but no matter——I'll not ſpeak——A Man ſhou'd not ſound his own Trumpet you know——but I have put my Hand in the Lyon's Mouth,——and that, Sir,——ſomebody knows very well——

Court. But, Sir, your Adventure?

Sir Amo. Gadſo, that's true——Why, you muſt know Mr. *Courtwell*, I had the good Fortune yeſterday, to receive a Letter of Invitation from a certain Lady of Quality, to come and play a Game or two at Picquet with her in her Husband's Abſence;——Now it was impoſſible, with Honour, to refuſe meeting ſo fair a Challenger; not that I had any violent Inclination——for I had, at the ſame time, above twenty Aſſignations upon my Hands——I don't know what the Devil the Women ſee in me——'Tis the Pleaſure of my Stars——But, to proceed——Fortune unluckily ſent her Husband home before we expected him, which put the Lady ſomewhat in a Hurry; but I quickly diſſipated her Fear, by concealing my ſelf under the Table——Well, the Husband enter'd the Room, and in a few Minutes call'd for Supper, which upon the Word, was brought in: Then, Sir, the Lady and he ſat down to it——But the beſt Jeſt is to come, Ha, ha, ha, for you muſt know, the Cuckold putting his Legs under the Table, and feeling me lie in his Way, gives me a confounded Kick on the Guts, crying, Get you out, you naſty, dirty Cur——A Pox on him for a cornuted Coxcomb, that cou'd not ſmell his Hornet from his Houſe-Dog.

Man. But you lay ſtill I ſuppoſe.

Sir Amo. Moſt certainly——A Lady's Reputation is ever ſafe in the ſacred Repoſitory of my Underſtanding. But pray mark what follows:——The Monſter was not contented with one Kick, but immediately gives me two or three more, crying, *Robin*, prithee pull this Dog from under the Table, I can't make him ſtir.

Court. How came you off then, Sir *Amorous*?

Sir Amo. Ha, ha, ha, came off! why triumphantly: For upon hearing that, I caught hold of part of his Leg with my Teeth, and bit him confoundedly:——He roar'd out like a Bull——Damme, the Dog has got hold of my Leg——

Leg—His Wife (knowing the Trick) pretended a Fright, ſqual'd out, leap'd up, and (as the ſaying is) accidentally on purpoſe overthrew the Table, and put out the Lights;—which gave me the Opportunity of making my Eſcape in the Hurry——which with Celerity I did, by *Jupiter*.

Court. I'll aſſure you, a very pleaſant Adventure. So you ſav'd the Lady's Reputation, and came off unhurt your ſelf.

Sir Amo. I can't ſay altogether unhurt, becauſe in the Fall of the Table, I happen'd to have a Diſh of Soup overthrown upon me, which ſpoil'd a Suit of white Cloaths, and ſcalded my Legs confoundedly.

Man. That I confeſs was unfortunate: But where have you been this Morning?

Sir Amo. In *Elyſium*, by *Jupiter*.

Man. How!

Sir Amo. Revelling in Pleaſures Imperial.

Man. Explain, explain, Man.

Sir Amo. Why, to deal ingenuouſly with you, I have paid a Viſit this Morning to one of the beautiful'ſt Women in the Univerſe——A Lady, Mr. *Courtwell*, that I had the good Fortune to take by the Heart ſome time ago;——but I can't forbear telling you the Happineſs I enjoy'd this Morning with that Maſterpiece of Nature—but I won't neither, you'll think me vain.

Man. Rather than you ſhou'd believe ſo, we'll not inſiſt on it.

Sir Amo. Won't you?——Why, faith that's Good-natur'd now, and I will tell you——You muſt know the Minute my Chariot ſtopt at the Door, I was met by her Woman, and with the moſt exuberant Satisfaction, conducted to her Chamber; which I no ſooner enter'd, but I had a full View of this charming Creature: I, Sir, adjuſted my ſelf with an agreeable Air, fetch'd a deep Sigh, clapt one Hand in my Boſom, and made a Bow down to the Ground——She, Sir, riſes out of her eaſy Chair, lets fly her looſe Gown, ſtretches out her Arms, crying, Ah, you Devil, what do you come for this Morning?——Her Poſture was ſo provoking, and her Queſtion ſo agreeable, that without anſwering one Word,

Word, I ſhot into her Arms at once, embracing her with Herculean Force, and with a voracious Appetite fed on her lovely Lips, which were ſever'd by a Breath ſweeter than *Arabian* Winds, more fragrant than Violet Buds juſt opening to the Morning's Eye, and on thoſe Roſy Mounts, inviting to the Taſte, there hangs an amorous Moiſture, Nectarious Dew, ſweeter than that the Sun, when ſhining o'er the Eaſtern Hills, exhales from the Carnation Buds.

Court. But, Sir *Amorous*, of ſo many fine Women you have convers'd with, was you never honourably in Love with any one?

Sir Amo. Never, by *Jupiter*——and if ever I become guilty of that Folly, may I be conjugally trapp'd——No, Sir, I ne'er was reduc'd to the Neceſſity of gaining honourably one Woman, becauſe I ever had the good Fortune to find the whole Sex at my Service, and upon my own Terms.

Court. You are a fortunate Man indeed; but notwithſtanding your Succeſs, I muſt believe there are a great many virtuous Women in the World.

Sir Amo. I can't contradict you, becauſe I never try'd 'em all,——but may I periſh if I don't think a handſom young Fellow, Importunity, and Opportunity, wou'd ſhake the firmeſt Foundation of Virtue in any young Woman in Chriſtendom.

Man. I wonder you ſhou'd be ſo averſe to Matrimony, but I durſt venture a good Sum you change your Opinion before the Year ends.

Court. Ay, ay, we muſt have you dub'd o'th' Order: What, Sir, you that have unmarry'd done ſuch Service in the Commonwealth, ought to receive the Honours due to it in Marriage.

Man. That he may do and never marry.

Sir Amo. As how! as how!—Come, I know you have a biting Jeſt at your Tongue's end: I like your Wit well, Colonel. Come, as how? as how?

Man. Why, if you can prove your Father was o'th' Order (which is very poſſible, we know he was a Citizen) and you lawfully begotten, then by the laudable Cuſtom

Cuſtom of the City, you may be a Cuckold by your Father's Copy, and never ſerve for it.

Sir Amo. Gad, I have ſomething in my Head that's very good.

Man. Is it poſſible! Come, out with it in the Name of Vanity.

Sir Amo. Why then, I muſt needs ſay, Colonel, your Satyr is like a Bee, it carries both Honey and a Sting, ha, ha, ha, you muſt allow that to be good.

Man. O admirable! Wit comes as eaſily from you, Sir *Amorous*, as Preferment from a Courtier without Money, or Money from a Citizen without Security.

Sir Amo. Very good again, Faith; I'd give an hundred Pounds I cou'd have ſaid ſuch a thing my ſelf.

Enter Aſpin.

Aſp. Sir, a Porter brought this Letter for your Honour.

Sir Amo. Hum——hum——hum——'ſdeath, a Man of Intrigue has a curſed Life——A Pox on't, I'll not go——The poor Soul will break her Heart too——Bid my Chariot turn about——Gentlemen, I muſt ask your Pardon, I hope the Violence of my Occaſions will efficatiouſly prevail upon your Good Nature to excuſe my abrupt Departure.

Man. O! we gueſs th' Occaſion, and 'twould be barbarous to detain you.

Sir Amo. Generous Soul!——Mr. *Courtwell*, I beg you'll give me an Opportunity to eſtabliſh an Acquaintance with you, and convince you how much I am your Admirer and humble Servant.

Court. Sir, 'tis an Honour you muſt confer on me.

[*Exit Sir* Amorous.

Man. What think you of this Spark for a Rival?

Court. I have no great Apprehenſion of Danger from that Quarter; beſides, I have luckily thought of a way to take him off from my Lady *Outſide*.

Man. As how?

Court. By propoſing my Siſter to him.

Man. Very conſcientiouſly conſider'd! you'd ruin your Siſter by marrying her to a Coxcomb, only to ſecure your Miſtreſs.

Court.

Court. No——I'll only engage him to make his Addreſſes to her, and pre-acquaint her with my Deſign, that ſhe may hold him in play to give me the fairer Opportunity with the Widow: In ſhort, I have told her the Propoſal I made to you, but not your unkind Anſwer.

Man. No, that wou'd have been barbarous;——for tho' I have no very agreeable Thoughts of Matrimony, I ſhou'd be glad of her Friendſhip; an agreeable Acquaintance gives a Reliſh to all the Pleaſures of Life—— When ſhall I ſee her?

Court. That's a Queſtion I can't tell how to anſwer. I diſprove of a mutual Friendſhip between Perſons of a different Sex, when there are no Thoughts of Marriage; ſuch Intimacies are pernicious to Virtue, at leaſt to Reputation, and Converſation too often diſcovers Charms that prove fatal to their Owner.

Man. Your Diſtruſt of my Friendſhip will bring your own Sincerity into Suſpicion. I own I love my Pleaſure, but not ſo paſſionately as to ſacrifice my Friend to it.

Court. Why, look ye, Colonel, we may pleaſe our ſelves with very fine Notions of Friendſhip and Honour, but egad, when Youth, Wit and Beauty come in Competition, Reaſon generally ſinks under th' Aſſault: The Eyes of a fine Woman are victorious Aſſailants; there's a ſort of Magick in Beauty, which no Philoſophy is Proof againſt. Deſire is an irreſiſtable Tyrant, that will break thro' the moſt ſacred Tyes; and you muſt excuſe me (I knowing your Temper) if I can't approve of your Acquaintance with my Siſter, but upon an honourable Intention.

Man. But may I ſee your Widow? Prithee tell me where ſhe lodges.

Court. I muſt ask your Pardon; I have Riva's enough already, and wou'd not create more. 'Tis not proper I ſhou'd let him know the Widow lodges in my Siſter's Houſe. [*Aſide.*] Well, I'll take my leave of you for the preſent, and immediately put my Deſign upon Sir *Amorous* in Execution: In the mean Time, I'll ſet a third Perſon on, who is my Friend, to perſwade the Widow to my Intereſt; while I, the better to hide my Artifice,

Artifice, will add Deceit to it, and upon Sir *Amorous*'s Neglect, will ſeem a little cold my ſelf, which can't fail to make her the more complying: 'Tis the Nature of the Sex to judge of the Merit by the Number of their Admirers, and when courted by many, they generally are inſolent to all.

Man. I always thought Love made an Aſs of a Man, but never knew it made a Politician of him before.

Court. Take this for a certain Maxim:

Love Buſineſs by Deceit is ſureſt done;
Woman's deceitful, and by that ſhe's won. [Exeunt.

The End of the Firſt ACT.

ACT II. SCENE *a Chamber.*

Lady Outſide *diſcover'd at a Toylet,* Neceſſary *waiting.*

Wid. THESE Weeds are very becoming to a fair Complexion, tho' I am quite weary of acting, and long to be out of 'em. Prithee, *Neceſſary*, how long has Sir *Thomas Outſide* been dead?

Neceſ. Has Sir *Thomas* been dead——let me ſee——He has been dead juſt two Months and five Days, Madam.

Wid. No longer! I vow it ſeems an Age.

Neceſ. One would not ſuppoſe your Ladyſhip thought ſo by your inconſolable Grief; for I never hear his Name mention'd in Company, but that your Ladyſhip's ready to go into Fits.

Wid. Why ay; Cuſtom has impos'd upon our Sex that Act of Diſſimulation: Not but I muſt own, Tears upon that Occaſion are very decent, and neceſſary.

Neceſ. Methinks your Ladyſhip was ſomewhat too raſh,

ſh, when you made a Vow never to marry again; but hope you don't mean to keep it.

Wid. Do'ſt think I'm mad?——No, no, that Vow, *ceſſary*, was Policy, it makes the Men the more ea- r to addreſs me; they are naturally vain, and love to gage with Difficulties——You ſee how I am peſter'd ith humble Servants, for all my Vows.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Madam, Mr. *Vulture* is come to wait on your dyſhip.

Wid. Deſire him to come up. [*Exit* Servant.] ye hear, *Neceſſary*, give me a clean Handkerchief, and y Bottle of Hartſhorn——Well, there's a great deal Trouble in performing the Ceremonies of Widow- od, and I really began ſo violently, that I fear, for ecency ſake, I ſhall be oblig'd not to marry till my ar's expir'd.

Enter Mr. Vulture.

Vult. Madam, I am your humble Servant: What, ſtill eeping? Rainy Weather ſtill!——A good Husband y ſerve as a warm Sun, to exhale thoſe untimely owers: But, Madam, I have made bold to wait on u this Morning, to know if I might wiſh you Joy : of gaining your Cauſe?

Wid. No, good Mr. *Vulture*, nor I don't know when hall, there are ſo many Delays in the Law.

Vult. Indeed and ſo there are——but I hope you have od Council—for a Law-Suit may be ſaid to reſemble Game of Cheſs, that may be play'd for Years by a uple of expert Gameſters, but a Bungler may loſe it one falſe Move.

Wid. You obſerve right, good Mr. *Vulture*: And n 'tis like a fine new Building, no body can tell at it will coſt, or when 'twill be finiſh'd—But pray down, Mr. *Vulture*, I want a little of your Advice; know a great deal of the Law. [*They both ſit.*

ult. I have ſome Reaſon, good my Lady; for I k come *Eaſter*-Term next, I have been in Law ſe- and forty Years.

Wid. You muſt now, Mr. *Vulture*, my Adverſary has pleaded yet.

Vult.

Vult. Non pleadavit Adverſarius, ſay you, ſo much the better, Madam:——Why what a Blockhead was his Attorney! Look'e, Madam, if he does not deliver in his Declaration by the next Eſſoign-Day, we'll Nonſuit him, and ſnap Judgment by Default. Pray Madam, who is your Attorney?

Wid. Mr. *Latitat* of *Lyon's*-Inn.

Vult. A very good Man truly, an experienc'd Practitioner, one that underſtands all the Quirks, Tricks, and Doublings of the Law. He *is*, in Truth, a ſtanch Attorney——But——

Wid. But what Sir?——

Vult. He does not put in Practice what he knows; he is a little too ſcrupulous; then there is another Thing, Madam, he wants Tools to work with.

Wid. What d'you mean, Sir?

Vult. Witneſſes, Madam; they are the Life-Blood of a Cauſe; a good Attorney can no more thrive without 'em, than a Sharper can without falſe Dice——Now my Attorney, old *Cerberus* of *Clement's*-Inn, is never without 'em; Witneſſes of all Sorts and Sizes, Fellows that are us'd to ſwear with brazen Faces, good Memories, and fear'd Conſciences.

Wid. You jeſt with me ſure——Is it poſſible there can be ſuch Villany?

Vult. Ah! Madam, I perceive you don't know the World; there's no living in't without Induſtry and Artifice: My Friend *Cerberus* has found it by Experience, for he is worth near Forty Thouſand Pounds.

Wid. I find, Mr. *Vulture*, Money is the only Deity you adore.

Vult. Except your fair ſelf, my good Lady; for I have learnt by near fifty Years Experience, that the richeſt Men in the Nation have been always eſteem'd the wiſeſt and the beſt——But this is foreign to your Law-Suit, I wou'd recommend to your Ladyſhip ſome of thoſe Witneſſes.

Wid. To me!——I had rather loſe my Cauſe, than make uſe of ſuch helliſh Inſtruments.——Have you no Conſcience?

Vult. Ye——ye——yes, Madam; I have a convenient, faſhionable,

fashionable, modern *Surtout* Conscience, to slip on and off as Occasion shall serve.

Necef. My Lady will be bless with a Husband. [*Aside.*

Wid. Well, but Mr. *Vulture*, if my Adversary shou'd plead, I shou'd be loth to stand to the Judgment of the Court.

Vult. Non ad Judicium!——Do you fear Corruption? Then I have a Trick to relieve you again:—— You shall get a *Habeas Corpus*, *cum Causa*, and remove it higher.

Wid. I find, Mr. *Vulture*, you have Tricks enow o' Conscience.

Vult. I have Tricks enow o' Law, no matter for Conscience——'tis not a Thing to thrive by——None but poor Folks pretend to it:——Ah! Madam! I love a litigious Suit; 'tis very *Manna* to me to be in Law; there is a Pleasure in the Vexation of others; I hug my self with the Thoughts of out-lawing a poor Rascal for Forty Shillings, before he knows any Thing of the Matter. I begin with *Capeas, alias & pluries, Exigent* and *Proclamation*, and so proceed to a *Capeas utlagatum*, in the twinkling of a Term, and before he is *rectus in curia*, 'twill cost him Ten Pounds to reverse th' Outlawry: Then the unspeakable Satisfaction there is of hunting him thro' the several Windings and Labyrinths of the Law, to plague him with Ejectments, Elegits, Extents, Judgments, Executions, *Cusa, & si fd, Scire-facias*, special Pleadings, Demurrers, Writs of Error, Rejoinders, Surrejoinders, Rebuters, Surrebuters, *cum multis aliis, que nunc proscribere longum est*; and then afterwards to toss him like a Tennis-ball thro' all the Courts of *Westminster-Hall*, from the Common-Pleas to the King's-Bench; thence to the Exchequer, and from thence into Chancery; and before the Game's up, I have a Bisk in my Sleeve, an Appeal to the House of Peers.

Wid. I see, Mr. *Vulture*, you are a perfect Master in the Jargon of the Law.

Vult. Truly, Madam, I have Reason: I have been a Term-Trotter any Time these seven and forty Years: In which space I have been at least sixteen Times beggar'd, and got up again, and in the Mire again, that I have

slunk

ſunk again, and yet got up again——And now at this Time I can make it appear, that by Lying in *Change-Alley*, and Swearing in *Weſtminſter-Hall*, I have got an Eſtate worth, *declare*, Fifty Thouſand Pounds; marry my good Lady, no contemptible Fortune; and (*ſin falice bora* be it ſpoken) I have at this Preſent nine and twenty Suits in Law.

Wid. Deliver me! what a wicked Caterpillar is this! [*Aſide.*

Vult. And all not worth Forty Shillings——A Stake pull'd out of my Hedge, there's one; I was well beaten I remember, there's two: When my Wife was living I took a Man in Bed with her, there's three; I was call'd Cuckold for my Labour, there's four: A Neighbour kill'd my Dog for howling, there's five; My Wife miſcarry'd with a Puſh, there's ſix, *&c ſic de cæteris*—— I have ſo vex'd and beggar'd the whole Pariſh with Proceſſes, Subpœna's, and ſuch like Moleſtations, they are not able to ſpare ſo much ready Money from a Term as to ſet up a new Weather-Cock upon the Church; nay, the Church-Wardens are forc'd to go to Law with the Poor's Money——Then again, I ſubpœna you up all the Men from the Village where I live every Term, ſo that 'tis impoſſible to be at civil Cuckoldry within our ſelves, unleſs the whole Country riſe upon our Wives.

Wid. One may gueſs by what you've ſaid, you are not very well belov'd in your Neighbourhood.

Vult. No, marry, wou'd I not, my good Lady; I know how to get more by my Enemies than my Friends; I am a perfect Maſter of the Science, and can fight you out all my Weapons at Law as clean as any Man.

Wid. What do you mean by your Weapons at Law?

Vult. There be ſeveral—As, your Writ of Delay, that is your Long-Sword; *Scandalum Magnatum* is Back-Sword, *Capeas & Quominus*, Caſe of Rapiers; a Writ of Execution, Sword and Dagger; a good Conſcience, Sword and Buckler——But that is a Weapon we ſeldom now-a-Days make uſe of in *Weſtminſter-Hall*; indeed 'tis quite out of Date.

Neceſ. Pray, Sir, what Religion are you of?

[*Very gravely, and curteſying.*

Vult. What Religion am I of?—Marry, Sweetheart, that's an odd Question—Why, I am of—Why what Religion am I of—Why I am a Stock-Jobber, Sweetheart, and now and then I am a Sollicitor upon Occasion.

Neceſ. Here's a Rogue for you, who makes Intereſt his Religion—yet paſſes in the Eye of the World for a ſober honeſt Man. [*Aſide.*

Vult. Getting Money, and going to Law, are the greateſt Pleaſures of my Life—I have got you in a Morning, in *Change-Alley*, by a well invented Lye, a Brace of Thouſands, I ha, ha, ha, landed the Duke of *Berwick* twice in the North of *Scotland*, and got conſiderably by it—I took *Sterling-Caſtle* once, but that indeed did not anſwer, Stocks fell but One and a half *per Cent.* by that—Take my Word, Madam, I am a very ingenious Perſon.—But, Madam, I am come once more to you upon the old Cauſe—I hope you have almoſt, by this time, overcome your Grief for the Death of your firſt Huſband, and will begin to conſider upon making ſome other Man happy; I need not recommend my ſelf to you more than I have done! You may find I am a Man to thrive in the World; and tho' I am a little old, I am hearty, Widow—and tho' the Snow does lie upon the Mountain-top, let me tell you there's a Warmth in the Valley.

Wid. O Mr. *Vulture*, you are a Man that I could have no Objection to, but my Vows, my Vows—and then to think of my poor Husband, the kindeſt, beſt of Husbands, Oh! oh! oh! [*cries out.*] Oh! I ſhall never forget him!

Neceſ. No, nor I neither, Madam, I am ſure I'm ready to break my Heart ev'ry time I think of him—for he was a-a-a ve-ve-very good Man at the bottom. Oh! oh! oh!

Vult. He was a very good Man indeed—I can't forbear Weeping too when I think of him. [*All cry.*

Enter Sir Amorous.

Sir Am. Madam, your Ladyſhip's moſt obſequious Vaſſal—Hey day! what! where am I? In the Houſe of Mourning ſure—Come, come, Madam, dry your Eyes; your Grief is of too long Duration: Pity your fair ſelf, clear

clear up thoſe radiant Lamps, reſtore 'em to their firſt Creation, Windows for Light, not Sluices made for Tears.

Vult. Verily, my good Lady, the Gentleman is in the right on't: Come, come, you muſt forget him.

Sir Am. Forget him! Ay, ay, Madam, and loſe the Thoughts of him in the Poſſeſſion of a better Husband.

Wid. Ah Sir, that's impoſſible! His Fellow's not on Earth.

Sir Am. No, Madam: Why, what d'you think of me? [*Turning to the Glaſs, and adjuſting himſelf.*

Vult. Ay, Madam, or what d'you think of me.—Mighty pretty Eyes thoſe—mighty pretty Eyes truly—Hide 'em for Shame, hide 'em, or you'll kill every body you look upon—[*Peeping in her Breaſt.*] Gads my Life! there's a pair of delicate white Breaſts to ſpare a Man in the Face—Nay, you have murder'd me, that's certain, I'll lay my Death to you.

Wid. You are pleas'd to be merry, Sir.

Vult. Say you ſo?—But 'tis in your Power to make me merrier, you underſtand me—[*Patting her with his Cane.*] Mum! a word to the Wiſe is enough—ha! thoſe Eyes! thoſe Eyes! why, I am not ſo old as I look to be—I am not above Threeſcore; a good Age, a very good Age indeed—I have liv'd temperately, not waſted my Health, nor my Strength upon the wanton Baggages of the Town. Hem! hem! There's Lungs! there's a Voice like a Game Cock—Hem! hem! [*falls a Coughing,* Neceſſary *ſtrikes him on the Back.*] So very well Sweetheart; I am mightily troubled with Phlegm—od I took it a little too high for my Conſtitution, but every time I look upon you, I fancy my ſelf but Eighteen, and my Heart ſprings in my Belly like a Bird in a Cage. [*Coughs.*] Oh Phlegm, Phlegm!

Sir Am. Pray Madam, how do you like the Cloaths I have on to Day?

Wid. They're wonderful becoming, and the Fancy perfectly new.

Sir Am. Indeed, Madam, they have an exotick Air, that's true.

Wid. There's no Man dreſſes more agreeable than you do

do *Sir Amorous*, or obliges the Town with more new Fancies.

Sir Am. And without Vanity I ſpeak it, no Man has been more ſucceſsful in that Matter than my ſelf——Pray Madam, obſerve how I put on my Hat——There, does not that look very ſmart?

Wid. O very ſmart.

Sir Am. I have an inimitable Cock with my Hat, that adds a Vivacity to my Looks, and gives my whole Face an Air agreeable and ſerene; and now I am talking of Dreſs, I'll tell you ſomething very pleaſant upon that Subject:—You muſt know, ſome time ago, a very pretty young Lady fell paſſionately in Love with me, for the ingenious and lively Fancy I expreſt in my manner of Dreſſing:——May I be ſtruck dumb to Perpetuity, if it ben't true.—I continu'd an Affair with her for ſome time; but her Paſſion grew ſo great, and her Conduct ſo ſmall, that I was forc'd to decline my Acquaintance; for I ſwear I ſhould not endure to have any Body think I ever had an Affair with a Woman in my Life:—Well, there's an unſpeakable Pleaſure in keeping one's Amours a Secret to the World.

Court. within. Prithee *Tom* don't be impertinent, I muſt go in.

Serv. within. Indeed Mr. *Courtwell*, my Lady gave me ſtrict Orders to keep you out.

Court. within. Indeed, *Tom*, you'll get your Head Broke for your Diligence.

Enter Courtwell.

Court. Madam, I'm your humble Servant—Heyday! what have we here, the Widow between *December* and *July*, courted at once by *Neſtor* and *Adonis*.

Wid. What means this baſe Companion?

Court. Baſe, Madam! he's not baſe that fights as high as your Lips—Come, come, put off thoſe melancholy Weeds—Thou haſt done virtuouſly, thou haſt ſtrangely griev'd for thy Husband, ſpent more Tears for his Death, than would ſerve a whole City of Widows in a Plague-time, beſides Sighings and Swoonings not to be credited.

Wid. Am I ſtill to be troubled with your rude Addreſſes, I thought I had given you an Anſwer long ſince.

Will.

Will no Denials ſhock thee? What is it thou preſum'ſt on.

Court. On your Judgment, Madam; not to make Choice of yon' walking Hoſpital, or that Butterfly for an Huſband; Fools with no more Merit than what conſiſts in lac'd Coats and full Bags; but of an honeſt hearty Fellow, endow'd with Health, Love, Youth and good Nature, which (in no more deform'd Perſon than my ſelf) may deſerve you.

Wid. Was ever ſuch Rudeneſs?

Court. Dear Madam, don't give the Child a wrong Name, term not that Rudeneſs which the *Sages* call true Confidence, founded on the moſt infallible Rock of a Woman's Inconſtancy—In ſhort, Widow, I am reſolv'd to make you happy, in ſpite of all the Reſolutions you have ta'en to the contrary: I can't ſuffer ſuch a delicious Flower to periſh on the Stalk, or be ſavagely pluck'd by by a prophane Finger.

Wid. Well, if ever I forgive this, may I——

Court. O! no more Vows, dear Widow——If I have offended you, let your remorſeleſs Chambermaid ſeize on my deſpis'd Body, bind me Hand and Foot, and hurl me——into your Ladyſhip's Bed.

Wid. Well, I proteſt I do more and more admire thee for——

Court. Madam, Ignorance is the Mother of Admiration, know me better, and you'll admire me leſs.

Wid. What would'ſt thou have me know?——Why doſt thou haunt me thus?——

Court. Only Madam, that the *Ætna* of my Sighs, and *Nilus* of my Tears, pour'd forth in your Preſence, might witneſs to you the hot and moiſt Affection of my Heart, and procure ſome Favour from your ſweet Tongue, or your more ſweet Lips, or what elſe your Ladyſhip ſhall eſteem more conducible to your divine Contentment.

Wid. I find thou haſt no Senſe of Shame left, and art not to be mov'd by ill Uſage——Therefore let me beg this as a Favour, that you wou'd give over your importunate Suit, and never ſhock me any more with that impudent hideous Face of thine.

Court.

Court. Come, come, not ſo deſpicable neither, Widow:——'Tis true, I don't uſe Milk, or Almond-Powder to it, but faith 'tis an honeſt Face tho', that can look againſt a Storm, or light a Fire at a Widow's Lips:——*Probatum eſt.* [*Kiſſing her, ſhe ſtruggling.*

Wid. Poiſon! Toads and Serpents!

Court. Aromatick Perfumes! Orange-Chips, and Heart-Cherries.

Wid. I never met with any Thing ſo impudent—— He's a charming Fellow, Faith. [*Aſide.*

Court. Nor I with any Thing ſo lovely, and were it Treaſon to kiſs theſe Lips, I wou'd die in the Sin——Prithee Widow make me thy Husband; thou ſhalt have ſwinging Intereſt for thy Money, tho' the Principal be ſunk.

Wid. Husband! Injure not that ſacred Title with thy prophane Lips:——Can I e'er think of a ſecond Husband, remembring the firſt?

Court. But view my Perſon well. [*Turns about.*] What think you, Does it not promiſe Heirs and Succeſſors? Faith I love thee heartily——

Wid. Love me! Love my Dog.

Court. That I'm bound to do by the Proverb. [*Hugging her.*

Wid. I'll have you toſs'd in a Blanket.

Court. In your Sheets Widow——Content——and you ſhall be my Toſſer——s'Death, what an armful of Provocation is here? [*Still embracing her.*

Wid. Gentlemen, can you ſtand tamely by, and ſee a Woman inſulted thus by ſuch a baſe Companion.

Vult. to Sir Amo. Sir, do you ſpeak to him, I am not a Man o'th' Sword; but if he ſays any Thing I can lay hold on, I promiſe you to take the Law of him.

Sir Amo. Sir, this Carriage is repugnant to the good Manners which ought——

Court. Sir—— [*Putting on his Hat.*

Sir Amo. Will you take a Pinch of Snuff, Sir, [*Obſequiouſly.*

Court. Damn your Snuff——D'ye mean to affront me, [*Strikes it in's Face, he ſtands and ſneezes.*

Vult. O fye, Sir! Does this become a Gentleman?

Court.

Court. Do'ſt thou prate, old Touchwood? Another Word, and I'll unſcrue thy moldy Noſe from thy Moth-eaten Face——You think of Matrimony——Prithee go home, old Sapleſs, ask Forgiveneſs for the Sins of thy Youth, and whiſtle to thy Grandchildren.

Vult. Sir, you are unmannerly: I am not ſo Old but I may live to whiſtle to Children of——

Court. Thy Neighbour's begetting, Old *Cent. per Cent.*——But can ſuch an old Raſcal as thou art have the Vanity to——

Vult. Bear witneſs, Madam, bear witneſs, he has call'd me Raſcal; that's *Scandalum Magnatum*, I'll trounce you for that.——Take Notice, I am upon my Preferment, in the Way of Marriage, and you have call'd me Raſcal before my Miſtreſs's Face; that will bear a ſwinging Action.

Sir Amo. If I put up ſo publick an Affront, I ſhall be made the common Anvil of the Town; I muſt draw my Sword to preſerve my Reputation, tho' I drop it immediately; beſides, he may have as little Courage as my ſelf, for I have often known a red Coat cover a Coward: [*Aſide.*] Sir, you muſt give me leave to return your Favour. [*Strikes him, draws, they fight, Sir* Amorous *drops his Sword.*

Sir Amo.——Why ay, this, is like a Man of Honour, now.

Wid. What mean you, Sir, by this Inſolence?——I hope you are not wounded——Well, 'tis a vaſt Pleaſure to have Men fight about one.

Sir Amo. By no other Weapons than your own puiſſant Eyes, againſt which no Poitrel is able to defend the Heart of Man. [*To Wid. aſide.*] I hope, Madam, you will excuſe my Departure; but, dear Lady, let me conjure you not to entertain the leaſt Concern for my ill Fortune; we muſt ſubmit to Fate——The greateſt Generals in the World have met with a Defeat.——Madam, I kiſs your immaculate Hands. Sir, yours. [*Exit.*

Wid. This is very fine! and will redound much to my Reputation.

Vult. [*Creeping from under the Table.*] I am very glad there is no Miſchief done: but I can take my Oath the other

other gave the firſt Blow——Indeed you did give the Affront, by flinging the Snuff in his Face;——but that is not an Aſſault:——Therefore I wou'd have you bind him over to the Peace, put him in the Crown-Office, ſwear an Aſſault againſt him: I am a Witneſs he ſtruck firſt; and a very little Coſt will procure you a Jury that will allow you vaſt Damages, and I'll take care and manage it? [*Exit.*

Wid. How dare you ſtay in my Preſence after ſuch Inſolence. [*Walks about.*

Court. While from Love's Altars Clouds of Sighs ariſe;
In ſmoaking Incenſe to adore thy Eyes.
[Drawling.

Wid. Sir, your Poetry is as diſagreeable to me as your Company; but if I muſt be perſecuted with the latter, pray ſpeak to me in plain Terms; I hate Verſe.

Court. Why then, in plain Terms, I am moſt damnably in Love with you.

Wid. That's plain enough. But let me tell you, I am——

Court. In Love with me. Ay, ay, I know you are Madam.

Wid. No Sir——But I am ſenſible you are——

Court. Very handſome—I know that too, Madam;—but, Lord, Madam, you need not be ſo fond to tell me ſo however.

Wid. Don't miſtake me, Sir——for I think you——

Court. A very clever Fellow altogether, and very fit to be your Lover.

Wid. Pray Sir, give me Leave to ſpeak.

Court. Agreed——But pray leave off Praiſing me:——Upon my Word, Widow, if you don't, I ſhall think you too forward.

Wid. Then Sir, I muſt tell you, I think you have a prodigious Stock of Aſſurance to intrude thus rudely into my Chamber: and pray tell me, how you dare do thus?

Nec. Ay, Sir, how dare you do thus? how dare you, I ſay?

Court. Now muſt I ſtop this Jade's Mouth.

Nec. Come, Sir, why don't you Anſwer how you came

came in, and who gave you Leave?——Come, Answer, Answer, Answer, Sir.

Court. If you don't hold your troublesome Tongue, Mrs. *Powderbox*, I shall stop your Mouth with half a Piece. [*Aside to her.*

Nec. Do your worst, I dare you to't——for I wou'd have you to know, a Woman's Tongue was not made to lie still, and whenever you come here again, pray learn the Manners to——

Court. Pay the Chambermaid's Fees as soon as I come in. [*Runs to her, puts Money in her Mouth, She struggles, he kisses her.*

Wid. O what do you mean, to murdur us?

Nec. O Madam, he has quite stopt my Breath, I am not able to speak a Word more.

Wid. Sir, what have you observ'd in my Behaviour at any Time, to encourage you to such Insolence? Sure you imagine you are in Company with some of your lewd Creatures.

Court. No; but I am in Company with the most disdainful, affected Coquet in Town; one who has more Vanity than her whole Sex, and as ill-natur'd as an old Maid.

Wid. I find, Sir, you'll oblige me to leave the Room.

Court. No, Madam; but I'll oblige you to stay, and take this Opportunity to inform you of my sincere Thoughts.——Nay, nay, you shan't stir, till I have held to you a Glass wherein you shall behold your Follies——I love you, and 'tis my Love which makes me free——I have hitherto born your Scorns with Patience——Indeed, I ever was too much your Friend to flatter you, or I might have receiv'd Favours as great as those Fops that have the Art of tickling your vain Ears with your own Praises; for Flattery is your darling Vice.

Wid. O dear! Is it out of Humour then? and does it rail? Ha! ha, ha. Is it angry indeed?

Court. Yes indeed is it, tho' its Pride won't let it own it——Psha! Psha! this Mirth is all feign'd!——nothing but Affectation!—I know you perfectly; you are the Reverse of what you appear——you laugh when you are most displeas'd, and seem most Angry when you are

moſt in Humour——Right Woman 'faith——Ha! the Fantome——Woman every Inch of her.

Wid. You are come to rail, I find. [*Walking about, he following her.*

Court. You have ſaid true, Madam——You are of ſo inconſtant a Temper, that you break this Minute what the laſt you reſolv'd on: The Wind changes not half ſo often as your Reſolutions.

Wid. Have you done, Sir?

Court. Not half.——I confeſs you are, are very handſome: Nature has given you a ſurpaſſing Beauty, but Pride, Affectation, and Self-conceit, darken with Folly your exterior Charms.

Wid. This Boldneſs, Sir——

Court. Is not pleaſing——I know it is not Madam, and yet 'tis Friendſhip all.——I wou'd have your Mind as beautiful and attractive as your Face, which is free from the leaſt Defect.——Faith, Widow, I am true, as your Glaſs, and will ſhew you all your Graces, with your Imperfections; for tho' I love you, yet I look on you with impartial Eyes.——You are affected, very affected, and I ſee it; yet love you too.

Wid. This Aſſurance.

Court. You are Proud too; proud of what you are not ſure to poſſeſs an Hour, Beauty, which is always withering, 'tis the worſt Part of a Woman——

Wid. Pray, Sir, take a little Breath; for by this Time methinks you ſhou'd want it.

Court. Then for your Reputation——which is but ſlightly guarded——

Wid. How, Sir——

Court. I ſay it again, Madam, your Reputation is but ſlightly guarded; for by your Coquetry you lie open to Scandal, and the Laſh of all detracting Tongues, which are ever buſie on the leaſt Occaſion; the Reputation of a Woman is like that chaſte Flower the *Amaranthus*, which is no ſooner touch'd, but withers; or a fair chryſtal Glaſs, our very Breath will dull it:——But your Ambition (notwithſtanding your Vow againſt a ſecond Marriage) is to have a Number of Gallants——You are become the Diſcourſe of the Chocolate-Houſe——The young,

young, the beautiful Widow *Outſide*, is a Butt for every Fop to aim his Rhetorick at; and will you perſevere in your Errors, ſtill be blind to your Miſ-conduct?

Wid. You talk as if you were really my Husband;—but I deſire you wou'd uſe theſe Freedoms where you have more Power.

Court. I hope I have ſome Influence over you.

Wid. You are miſtaken, I aſſure you, Sir; and however the good Humour I have treated you with (which was more in Reſpect to your Siſter, than any real Eſteem for your ſelf,) may have flatter'd you into a falſe Opinion of my Love; you'll find your ſelf egregiouſly miſtaken——So, Sir, eternally adieu——I never was ſo provok'd in my Life, and I have a good Mind to marry him, to be reveng'd on him. [*Exit.*

Court. She's gone, and I have laſh'd her Vanity till it ſmarts—I know ſhe loves me, tho' her Affectation wou'd conceal the charming Flame;

'Tis certain ſhe has felt Love's powerful Dart,
Each Look, each Action does confeſs the ſmart:
The amorous God his Trophies does diſplay,
And what her Heart wou'd hide, her Eyes betray. [Exit.

The End of the Second ACT.

ACT III. SCENE *a Chamber.*

(Table and Candles.)

Enter Miranda *and* Courtwell.

Mir. A Y, marry Brother, this Widow wou'd be a Jewel worth the wearing, if a Man knew how to win her——Well, I'll be your Advocate, and plead your Cauſe as well as I can, tho' I deſpair of Succeſs.

Court. Why ſo, *Miranda*?

Mir. Becauſe Love can no more be carry'd on with-

out Money, than a Suit of Law, and you know you have the Curſe of a younger Brother's Fate, and conſequently, muſt ſue in *Forma Pauperis*——My Father, you know, was moſt indulgent to the weakeſt; he has left the Fool my elder Brother a large Eſtate to get him a Wife; I, who am but a homely Girl, a conſiderable Portion to procure me an Husband, and you a ſufficient Wit to make your Fortune.

Court. A very pretty Legacy, Faith. Well, ſince 'tis my all, I muſt put it to the beſt Uſe I can, and that is, I think, to redouble my Attack upon the Widow.

Mir. Might I adviſe, Brother, you ſhou'd raze the Siege, believe me, 'twill be Time loſt:—If there were no other Bar, ſhe is too Rich, too much above you.

Court. There you're out, Sir; young Widows and old Maids, are the only Refuge for younger Brothers. Widows are the only Judges of Man's Fleſh, and have a greater Reſpect to ſomething elſe in a Husband than a Fortune. Look you, *Miranda*; in one Speech, why ſhou'd I deſpair that *Cupid* has one Dart in ſtore for Lady *Outſide*, as well as any other rich Lady, whom he has made to ſtoop to her Cook, her Butler, or her Footman; ſuch Marriages the preſent Age has produc'd, and yet none of 'em been more than a nine Days Wonder. In a Word, I am ſure of Succeſs; ſuch Attempts, purſu'd with Reſolution, are ever ſeconded by Fortune.

Mir. But Brother, do you conſider the Vows ſhe has made againſt a ſecond Marriage?

Court. Womens Vows, like great Mens Promiſes, are often made, but rarely kept: Why, you ſee ſhe is already acceſſible for Suitors; and let me tell you, if once a Woman conſent to parly with her Lover, he may promiſe himſelf a Surrender, depend on't. I have ſet her Heart upon as fickle a Pin as the Needle of a Dial, that will never let it reſt 'till it be in the right Poſition.

Mir. Why do you imagine this?

Court. Becauſe I ſaw *Cupid* ſhoot in my Words, and open his Wounds in her Looks; her Blood went and came *a Errants*, betwixt her Face and her Heart; and ſuch Changes, I can tell you, are ſhrewd Tell-Tales.

Mir. Your Vanity alone, which miſtakes the Effects of

of her Reſentment for the Symptoms of Love: I know ſhe can't endure you——Beſides, ſuch Vows, ſuch Reſolutions——

Court. Her Vows are gone to Heav'n with her Husband, they bind not upon Earth; and as for Women's Reſolutions, I muſt tell you, the Planets and the Winds have a great Stroke in 'em, and if they prove not as weak as Wafers, ſay I have no Skill in the Sex.

Mir. But then ſuch Sorrow, ſuch a continu'd Courſe of Mourning——

Court. For all this I'll not diſpair; I never yet knew a Woman mourn ſo violently but ſhe diſſembled. Experience tells me how ſhort-liv'd Widows Tears are; their weeping is, in Truth, but laughing under a Mask, they mourn in their Gowns, and laugh in their Sleeves; all which I firmly believe, and am reſolv'd to die in that Faith. [*Exit.*

Mir. Go thy Ways, and if Confidence have any Influence in Courtſhip, thou haſt enough to promiſe thee Succeſs with half the Sex—But now for my own Affair with the Colonel; I long to know the Succeſs of the laſt Embaſſy, and am impatient till *Betty* return. [*Exit.*

SCENE changes to Col. Manly's *Apartment*; Betty *enters thro' a private Place in the Wainſcot, and ſhuts up the Pannel.*

Bet. So, I have watch'd a good Opportunity; the Colonel and his Servant are abroad, and I am got ſafely here in the Dark, becauſe no Suſpicion may happen by diſcovering a Light in the Room——Let me ſee—Where have I put my Miſtreſs's Letter, which I am to leave upon the Table? O Heavens! my eager Haſt has made me leave it behind me: Sure I'm not in Love, that I'm ſo forgetful—'Tis no matter, it lies but in my own Room, I can quickly return with it——Ha! I can't find my Way out again——'Tis ſo dark, that I don't know whereabouts I am! [*Feeling about for the private Place.*] I have done finely——So, I ſee a Light, ſome Body's coming——I find the Train of Diſcovery has took Fire, and all our Plot will be blown up in a Trice. [Aſpin *unlocks the Chamber-Door, and enters with a Candle.*

Asp. Now am I almost afraid to enter, least I should meet with some of these Fairies——*Stands peeping and trembling at the Door.*] Shall I [Betty *hides her self by the side Scene.*] venture or no? Hang Fear, 'tis below a Man of my Courage——[*Comes forward a little*; Betty *slips behind him, and mimics as he does.*

Bet. Now if I can see whereabout the private Door is, I'll attempt to blow out the Candle, and whilst he goes to light it again, I may find an Opportunity to slip away; 'tis but venturing, Fear and Necessity often make Cowards brave, and give their Courage Success.

Asp. [*Peeping about.*] I begin to be a little afraid; I wish none of these Fairies be here invisible; for methinks the Candle begins to burn blue. [*Walks about the Room, starts at the Table.*] What's that! oh! 'tis the Table——Here's nothing here——[*After he has walk'd about the Room, while she follow'd him, he gets in the middle of the Stage and speaks.*] Hem!——Now my Heart's in my Belly again, and my Courage is return'd——I don't believe, if the Devil himself were here (Lord bless us) I shou'd be afraid——[*She strikes him a Box o'th' Ear.*] Humph! that substantial Favour cou'd not come from a Thing of Air; it had the full Weight of Flesh and Blood——[*Turns about and holds up the Candle to her Face; she blows it out, just at which Col.* Manly *enters.*] What the Devil are you, Madam——Oh the Devil! the Devil! the Devil!

Enter Col. Manly.

Col. Either my Eyes deceiv'd me, or I saw the Glimpse of a Woman as I enter'd——*Aspin*, what's the Matter.

Asp. O dear, Sir, are you there?—For Heaven's Sake have a care of your self—Here's a whole Troop of Devils in the Room, besides a vast Tribe of Witches and Fairies.

Col. Prithee be quiet, Blockhead.

Asp. Dear Sir, make no Words, but send immediately for a Parson. I am bewitch'd! I am possess'd! The Devil has conjur'd his Flames into my right Ear already.

Bet. Now I shall get off. [*She feeling about for the private Place, the Col. lays hold of her.*

Col. Have I caught you? I have laid hold on one

I'm

I'm ſure, and 'tis a Woman. *Aſpin*, run and fetch a Light quickly.

Bet. What ſhall I do?

Aſp. A Woman! the greater Devil than I'm ſure—— Let her go, dear Sir, let her go.

Col. Bring a Candle I ſay——[*Exit* Aſpin.] I find my little Fairy, there's ſome Subſtance in you——I have a ſtrong Inclination to try if you be Fleſh and Blood; the Room is dark, and very fit for the Purpoſe.

Bet. What ſhall I do?——Fortune, ſtand my Friend but now, and I'll never tempt thee ſo again. [*Gives a ſudden Spring out of his Arms.*] I'm free at laſt.

Col. Are you at that Sport, my Dear?——Nay, then I'll ſecure the Door, and if you are a Spirit, you ſhall exert your Power, and vaniſh thro' the Keyhole.

[*Runs to the Door, pulls it too, and holds it faſt.*

Bet. So, now I have found the right Place, and if ever I venture ſo again, I wiſh I may be raviſh'd.

[Betty *goes thro' the private Door, and ſhuts it after her.*

Col. I hear no Body ſtir.

Enter Aſpin *with a Candle.*

Aſp. I have brought a Candle, Sir: Come bring the Fairy to the Light; I can look at her with more Pleaſure now ſhe's a Priſoner, than I felt her a little while ago——Maſter, we'll ſwear ſhe's a Witch, and have her burnt——Where is ſhe, Sir? [*Looking about.*

Col. Where is ſhe?——Why, in the Room I think.

Aſp. [*Looking about the Room.*] I can't ſee her, Sir; but perhaps ſhe may have conjur'd a Miſt before my Eyes, for I can't perceive the leaſt Glimpſe of any Body but your ſelf——Why, you have not got hold of her now, have you Maſter?

Col. Got hold of the Devil, you Blockhead——How is it poſſible ſhe ſhou'd get away?——I am certain I ſecur'd the Door. Surely ſhe deals with the Devil.

Aſp. I warrant ſhe does, and he has carry'd her away in a Whirlwind.

Col. I am diſtracted till ſhe's found.

Aſp. Then Sir, 'twill be a long Time before you recover your Senſes.

Col.

Col. 'Sdeath to be thus out-witted by a Woman! I'll find her out I'm reſolv'd.

Aſp. Ah! Sir, don't be too curious, it may be very fatal to us; for Spirits, like Statesmen, don't care that ordinary Perſons ſhou'd pry too much into their Secrets.

Col. This Fellow is as fearful at Thirty, as a raw Boy that is bred up with an old Grandmother, and had his Education only amongſt Women——I'll employ one Hour more of this Night, I'm reſolv'd, to make the Diſcovery. Come along Trembler. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE changes to the Widow's Lodgings. Table and Candles.

Enter Clarinda *and the* Widow.

Wid. Nay, dear Couſin, tell me what you have met with, ſince you have been with *Miranda*, to occaſion this ſudden Uneaſineſs? I am ſorry you have ſo mean an Opinion of my Friendſhip or Sincerity, to refuſe acquainting me with this Cauſe of your Tears.

Clar. Dear Couſin forgive me; and if your Patience will permit, you ſhall know the Cauſe of 'em——You are ſenſible, that before my Father dy'd, his Extravagance had conſum'd the greateſt Share of his Patrimony, and left me only with two hundred Pounds to the Care of my Uncle, who quickly deny'd me the Protection of his Houſe; and turn'd me out a Prey unto Misfortune.

Wid. This I have heard, and often wonder'd at my Uncle's Barbarity.

Clar. The Fault was mine, and 'tis ſeverely puniſh'd. Know that wicked Man, Sir *Amorous Vainwit*, came down with a Relation of my Uncle's to his Houſe in *Wiltſhire*, where I then reſided——My Beauty tempted him to betray my Innocence:——He had not been many Days before he made known his Paſſion——I then being young, unknowing in the ſubtil Wiles of Men, with Pleaſure hearken'd to his Love: He ſoon perceiv'd his Conqueſt, and made a ſtronger Application: At length his Oaths and Vows ſo won upon my Heart——I bluſh to tell the reſt.

Wid. Wicked Man!

Clar.

Clar. After he had ſubdu'd my Virtue, his Occaſions preſs'd him up to *London*. He left me, but with ſtrong Aſſurances of Marriage——Six Months were paſs'd without e'er hearing from him:—But then, the Puniſhment of guilty Love I cou'd conceal no longer——My Aunt made me confeſs the whole Affair;——but ſtill conceal'd it from my Uncle's Knowledge, till I was brought to bed of a fair Boy, the Witneſs of his unhappy Mother's Shame; then my cruel Uncle ſhow'r'd on me all his Rage, and ſoon as I was able, turn'd me from his Houſe.

Wid. Poor *Clarinda*.

Clar. I then came up to Town——My Boy, Heaven was pleas'd to take——I found out Sir *Amorous*; but he, to add to my Afflictions, when I expected Pity and Redreſs, deſpis'd and ſcorn'd me; and while I was drinking Tea with *Miranda* this Afternoon, her Brother, Mr. *Courtwell*, propos'd him to her for a Husband——You may be ſure this alarm'd me; for ſhou'd he marry, then all my Hopes of Help from him were loſt, and I ſhould be abandon'd to the utmoſt Shame and Poverty.

Wid. I am not ſo much ſurpriz'd at the Ingratitude of Mankind, who generally return with Neglect the higheſt Obligations of our Sex, as that after ſo many Examples of their Perfidy, we ſhou'd ever confide in their falſe Oaths, and Promiſes, and purchaſe Contempt at the Expence of our Virtue and Fame——But, dear Couſin, I cannot expreſs my Concern for your Misfortunes; I wou'd adviſe you quickly to make *Miranda* acquainted with your Story. She's good-natur'd, and will contrive ſome Means for your Redreſs.

Clar. I have already—I waited till her Brother went away, and told her all—Her tender Heart was mov'd; ſhe promis'd me her Aid, bid me have Hope, for that ſhe wou'd engage I ſhou'd marry him before I went to Bed; but how that's poſſible I can't conceive. However, ſhe aſſur'd me, it ſhou'd be ſo; and has order'd me to be with her by Eight o'Clock.

Wid. This is ſurprizing! 'Tis now after Six—I ſuppoſe ſhe'll not go out to Night, ſo Couſin, I'll go to her Apartment, pay her a Viſit by my ſelf, and encourage her to proceed in your Cauſe. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE

SCENE changes to Col. Manley's *Lodgings.*

Enter Colonel *and* Aſpin.

Col. I wonder that no body appears yet.

Aſp. Heav'n ſend they mayn't, for if they ſhou'd, they'd make my Hair briſtle up an End like a Turkey-Cock's Tail.

Col. What ſtill repeating the ſame fearful Tune.

Aſp. Ay, Sir, if you call it ſo; but Fear makes very dull Muſick; the Sound of ſuch another Box on the Ear, wou'd reduce it to nothing but Diſcord. Methinks, tho' I have no great Skill, 'tis like touching the Strings too harſhly.

Col. Come, no more of your Nonſenſe.

Enter Miranda *thro' the private Door, with a Dark-Lanthorn in her Hand.*

Col. I fancy, I hear ſome body tread.

Aſp. O Lord! no ſure! Maſter, pray let me fetch a Candle.

Col. You talk like a Blockhead: We are likely to make a Diſcovery of any Thing with a Light.

Aſp. I know what my Maſter talks like——if I durſt tell him, to ſuppoſe we can make a Diſcovery of any Thing without. O Lord! yes, I beg his Pardon, now I think on't, a Woman may be diſcover'd in the Dark.

Mir. I'll ſtay here, and write my *Billet-deux.* Well, now I'm pretty ſafe; but I run as many Dangers as a romantick Knight in an enchanted Caſtle, and Love has made me full as ridiculous——I have juſt Reaſon enough to know I act againſt Reaſon, elſe why ſhou'd I be ſo induſtrious to declare my Paſſion to the Man, and at the ſame Time, ſo deſirous to conceal my Perſon from his Knowledge: Certainly, I am actuated by that little Deity, *Cupid*, who ſports himſelf in the whimſical Actions of us Mortals.

Aſp. I fancy I heard ſomething mention Enchantment juſt now. I am afraid the Devil is in the Room, for I begin to ſmell Brimſtone——Pray, Sir, let us go down Stairs, for if we ſtay in this Room much longer, we ſhall be both frighted out of our Wits.

Col.

Col. Come this Way: If I am not miſtaken, I heard ſome body in the Room.

Aſp. Dear Sir, don't let us venture thus in the Dark, for the Fairies may have ſome evil Deſign upon us; beſides, it looks very much like the Sin of Preſumption.

Col. Tread ſoftly, and don't give the Enemy Notice of our Approach.

Aſp. Lord, Sir, I am juſt ready to beat an Alarm with my Teeth.

Col. Hold your Tongue, you Son of a Whore, and keep your Teeth together, or I'll cut one out, and beat the other down your Throat.

Aſp. Pray, Sir, let me fetch a Light.

Mir. So, here's the Table. Now for a Diſpatch of Buſineſs. [*Sits down, opens the Lanthorn and writes.*

Col. You may ſpare your ſelf the Trouble; for ſee, you no ſooner deſire a Light, but you have one.

Aſp. O Lord! what do I ſee?——There's the Devil in *Propria Perſona*——Maſter, dear Sir, have you never an Errand to ſend me of?——O Lord, O Lord! my Heart beats a March to my Heels.

Col. I'll beat your Brains out, if you don't make your Heart and your Heels agree.

Aſp. Lord, Sir, you quite miſtake the whole Matter, they are agreed upon going, and only want you to give the Word.

Col. Sirrah, hold your Tongue.

Aſp. You need not bid me, for Fear has made me ſo dry in my Mouth, that my Tongue is almoſt become uſeleſs; but if you don't make haſte, my Teeth will quickly do the Office of my Tongue, and tell her how my Heart beats. O! a Ghoſt! an Apparition! A Parſon, a Parſon! fetch a Parſon quickly! [*Colonel goes behind the Table, takes up the Lanthorn, and claps hold of* Miranda.

Mir. I am betray'd!

Col. Stand away Blockhead——Have I caught you, Madam? I'll take Care you ſhan't ſlip thro' my Hands again. [*Looks on her.*] Ha! methink I ne'er ſaw one ſo beautiful before——What means this Palpitation at my Heart——'Tis ſo; ſhe's ſome Divinity come down from Heav'n

Heav'n to bleſs me, and I have offended her with my Raſhneſs. [*Gazing at her.*

Aſp. So; now will my Maſter be for committing Fornication with a Witch.

Mir. I find I have ſome Influence over him; at leaſt, the Vanity of my Sex tells me ſo:—Heaven ſend it may be true——My Hand is in the Lion's Mouth, and I muſt pull it very gently out to make my Eſcape.

Col. Whee a ſudden Invaſion have her Charms made on my Heart?

Aſp. How earneſtly my Maſter ſtares on this gay Shadow? 'Tis no more I'm ſure; for I'll warrant it will vaniſh preſently.

Col. Madam, who you are I know not, nor can I remember I ever ſaw you before——But what you are, Angel nor Goddeſs are Terms great enough to expreſs—therefore pray inform me of the one, whilſt I admire at the other.

Mir. Sir, your Stile is very courtly, and more perhaps than the Subject deſerves; but I eſteem it as it is, a Compliment; tho' to anſwer you plainly who I am, be aſſur'd I am a Woman of no mean Fortune or Extraction——and what I am you may judge:——I am your Priſoner at preſent——So leave you to determine.

Aſp. That you may do preſently, Sir; Look but a little nearer to her——Notwithſtanding ſhe's ſo beautiful, I warrant ſhe has cloven Feet underneath.

Col. Impudent Blockhead be gone! [*Strikes him.*

Aſp. With all my Heart; for I never was ſo weary of my Company before. [*Exit.*

Col. Now, Madam, ſhall I have the Happineſs to know your Name.

Mir. Let what I have told you ſuffice at preſent: Be like a Soldier of Honour, truſt me upon my Parole, and you ſhall hear farther from me in Half an Hour. Be ſatisfy'd I am a Woman of Reputation, tho' my preſent Conduct may have brought it into Suſpicion, and I expect you wou'd treat me as becomes a Gentleman, and one whom I eſteem, as you may ſuppoſe.

Col. Nay, nay, my Dear; now I find you are a Mor-

tal

tal I ſhan't part with you, but upon very advantageous Conditions.

Mir. Then I am loſt again—O for a Stratagem!—Now all the Invention, Craft, Subtilty of my Sex aſſiſt—Sir, I beg you to releaſe me now, and in Requital of your Generoſity, come but into the Piazza of *Covent-Garden* in Half an Hour, there ſhall a Chair wait for you, and bring you where I dare own my ſelf with Honour, and, I hope, to both our Satisfactions.

Col. Pardon me, Madam; I dare not take your Word; that wou'd be like venturing all my Treaſure to Sea in a Storm.

Mir. What do you intend to do with me, Sir?

Col. To love you.

Mir. And not obey me!

Col. Obedience in a Lover is as Romantic as Conſtancy. Beſides, I know you are a Woman of more Senſe, than to expect it in ſuch an Affair as this.

Mir. Stratagem is the peculiar Wiſdom of our Sex: But to anſwer you in your own Profeſſion, ſince you refuſe to admit of a Truce, I muſt take other Methods, and compel you to it. Behold this Mark upon my Hand, and then detain me if you can. [*Takes a Pinch of Snuff out of her Box ſecretly. She holds up her Hand, he comes to look at it, ſhe blows the Snuff in his Eyes, he ſtamps, drops the Lanthorn, which ſhe takes up, turns the dark Side, and eſcapes thro' the ſecret Place.*

Col. Zoons! She has put my Eyes out. *Aſpin*, a Light quickly, a Light you Dog!

Enter Aſpin *with a Candle.*

Aſp. So, I thought what it wou'd come to——is the Fairy gone, Sir?

Col. Gone! yes; and has almoſt blinded me with blowing Snuff in my Eyes.

Aſp. No, no Maſter: I warrant you it was Brimſtone.

Col. Did not you meet her?

Aſp. If I did, it was inviſible: but I believe I might; for as I was coming haſtily in, the Candle had like to have been blown out, and I believe it was ſhe whiſking by me in a Whirlwind.

Col. Twice together to be out-witted thus.

Aſp. What better can you expect by keeping ſuch Diabolical Company?

Col. We are in a Dream ſure, and Fancy plagues us with a fantaſtick Form.

Aſp. As to its being fantaſtick, 'tis the Form of a Woman, and therefore no Wonder; but I believe we ſhall be the firſt that ever dream't when we were broad awake.

Col. What's here? [*Takes the Letter off the Table.* Reads,

Sir, *I begin to be tir'd with the Pranks I have play'd you; therefore leſt I ſhould bring my Honour into Suſpicion, I think it Time to diſcover my ſelf. If you will be in the Piazza in* Covent-Garden *this Evening, their ſhall be a Chair.*

But what ſhou'd follow?——Why certainly what ſhe told me——This Intrigue, the nigher it draws to a Diſcovery, appears the more Intricate. I'll venture however, and never give over till I have diſſolv'd this Charm.

Like Woman, I'll invent, till Means are found,
With equal Craft this Riddle to expound. [Exeunt.

The End of the Third ACT.

ACT IV.

Enter Lady Outſide, *and* Miranda, *peruſing a Letter.*

Mir. HOW excellent is the Stile! ſuch ſoft, ſuch eaſie Language! as if the Quill that wrote it had been pluck'd from *Cupid's* Wing.

Wid. But prithee, dear *Miranda*, what do you deſign to do with this Colonel?

Mir. Why, I intend after veizing him a little more, to diſcover my ſelf to him.

Wid.

Wid. What do you mean by that?

Mir. Why, he's a Man of more Wit than to be impos'd on ſo much longer; therefore I had rather the Diſcovery ſhou'd be owing to my Generoſity, than his Genius. Beſides, the Deſign begins to have ſo little Variety in it, that it's no longer agreeable; and tho' I was fond of it at firſt, as our Sex is of a new Faſhion; ſo after two or three Times, the Delight of it is gone, and now I'd bring it to a Concluſion.

Wid. If an Amour grows diſagreeable, what will a Husband do?

Mir. Perhaps the ſame: Tho' the Variety of our Tempers may take off the dull Notes of Matrimony. But, Madam, I want to have a little ſerious Diſcourſe with you; I wou'd very fain make a Siſter-in-Law of you.

Wid. Sure you take me to be as mad as your ſelf.

Mir. Why not?——Come, I'll venture firſt into the Road of Matrimony, and then it will be eaſie for you to follow my Tracks.

Wid. Whether the Colonel will have you, or no?

Mir. I'd fain ſee a handſom Fellow of his Wit and Station, that wou'd refuſe a pretty young Lady with a good Fortune; but if you wou'd not have me beat the Path for you, I'll take Care when my Brother comes next, that you ſhall do it for me.

Enter Courtwell.

And here he comes, in the critical Minute too, I hope. Brother, I have been pleading your Cauſe to my Lady *Outſide*; but I'm afraid I ſhan't prove a ſucceſsful Advocate, conſidering a younger Brother's my Client, and a rich Widow the Judge: Fortune is grown the beſt Orator in Love.

Court. You are in the right, Siſter: Jointure and Pin-Money have clearly got the better of Merit and Affection; but I'll never repine at that; for fine Women, like great Tables, tho' they are maintain'd by Men of Fortunes, are ever open to Men of Parts.

Wid. The Women are ever ſure of your good Word, Mr. *Courtwell*; when you have a Miſtreſs, I hope ſhe'll deſerve it from you in particular, and have in Perfection

all thoſe good Qualities you ſo liberally beſtow upon the whole Sex in your Diſcourſes.

Court. Why, Madam, I thought you had underſtood Raillery better; this is only the Way of Talking I have got among my Companions, where, when we meet over a Bottle, 'tis held as great a Part of Wit to rally Women handſomely behind their Backs, as to flatter them to their Faces.

Mir. I find 'tis Time for me to withdraw. In theſe Sort of Engagements, a third Perſon is wholly unneceſſary. [*Exit.*

Wid. But why do you make us poor Women the Subject of your Mirth? Why are we ſo barbarouſly treated by you?

Court. Becauſe you are ſo uncharitable, ſo hard-hearted, and are encompaſs'd with ſo many Difficulties, as Decency, Honour, and Reputation, that the Men that love their Pleaſure, begin to hate you worſe than Beggars do a Coach with the Glaſſes drawn up, deſpair of Relief, and fall a Railing.

Wid. But pray Mr. *Courtwell*, to what kind Saint do we owe your Converſion?

Court. You are very forgetful ſure: How often have my Eyes told you, when my Tongue durſt not, the Pains you gave my Heart? Need I tell you any more, 'tis your fair ſelf I love. I have loſt the Pleaſure of Mirth, of Wine, and Company, all Things that were before delightful to me, are no longer ſo. My Life is grown but one continu'd Thought of your fair ſelf?

Wid. Come, leave your Fooling. I think your old Humour does better with you a thouſand Times than this whining Love?

Court. Why here 'tis now, there are ſo many Cheats in this Trade of Love too, that, like Beggars, the true go unreliev'd, becauſe we meet with now and then a Counterfeit; but faith Madam I wou'd not trouble you, cou'd my Pain admit of Redreſs from any but your ſelf.

Wid. Sure, Mr. *Courtwell*, you wou'd think I had an excellent Opinion of my ſelf, or an implicit Faith in whatever you ſay, ſhou'd I believe all this now.

Court.

Court. If I told a Surgeon I had broke my Leg, d'you think he wou'd not take my Word?

Wid. Yes ſure.

Court. Why ſhou'd not you take it then for a wounded Heart? They are neither of 'em Matters to brag of; and I wou'd no more lead the Life of a Lover if I were free, than I wou'd that of a ſick Man if I were well.

Wid. Methinks the ſick Men, as you call them, look ſo like the well, that one can ſcarce know one from the other.

Court. In your Chamber perhaps; but abroad we find a thouſand Differences.

Wid. As how I pray?

Court. Why your true Lover leaves all Company when the Mirth begins, the Table when the Bottles are call'd for, the Gaming-Houſe when the Cards come up; is more afraid of an Engagement than a Lawyer in Term-Time; wou'd leſs miſs the laſt Act of a Play, the Park, or indeed, any abominable old Lady's, where he may hope to ſee the Party, than a Citizen's young Daughter *wou'd Gray's-Inn-Walks* the firſt Sunday of her new Gown.

Wid. And will you be ſuch an Animal for my ſake?

Court. Faith I am already; but if not well us'd, I ſhall find the way home again.

Wid. Whatever you think, Sir, I ſhall contribute no more to the keeping you my Servant, than I did to the making you ſo.

Court. Well, do but uſe as proper Means to keep me your Servant, as you did to make me ſo, and I am ſatisfy'd.

Wid. Why, what Means?

Court. As your Beauty bred my Affection, ſo let your Kindneſs nouriſh it.

Wid. Why, I am tender-hearted, *Courtwell*; but then you have been ſuch an inconſtant——

Court. Oh Madam, your right Lover, like your true bred Spaniel, will range; 'tis only a Proof of his high Mettle; but when his lawful Game's before him, down, down——

Wid. Ay, down——down——indeed, when his lawful Game's before him; but in my Opinion, that's not ſo commendable a Quality in a Lover, whatever it be in a Spaniel.

Court. O what untoward Suſpicions theſe Widows have.

Wid. But let me ſee; what may I expect if I conſent to be your Wife?——I muſt board half a Year with a Friend in the Country, tumble about the other half in moſt villainous Hackneys, ſee you when you have no Money to play, and then be kiſs'd out of a Ring or a Bracelet.

Court. I wou'd not uſe a City-Widow of Five and Fifty ſo, with Seven ſmall Children: Do but Conſent, Madam, and I'll this Minute ſend for a Parſon and a Licenſe, for fear you ſhou'd change your Reſolution.

Wid. Hold, hold, *Courtwell*——My Heart fails me.

Court. 'Sheart, I had a Qualm two: There's certainly a more than ordinary Providence attends me——I ſhall 'ſcape yet: I am now in a Twitter, like a Gameſter upon a great Bet, that is heartily afraid he ſhould loſe it, and yet his Love to the Money won't ſuffer him to draw Stakes——Well, I muſt have her.

Wid. Indeed you won't——I have conſider'd better on't——Your humble Servant. [*Exit.*

Court. Heyday! Certainly there's nothing in the Creation ſo fantaſtical as a Woman——There's no Hopes of Succeſs, I find, by a regular Siege, ſo I'll e'en employ my Force another way, and take the Citadel by Surprize; and here comes one that may be a very proper Inſtrument, I muſt endeavour to bribe her to my Intereſt: In theſe Caſes, there's nothing like a Friend within the Walls.

Enter Neceſſary.

Nec. I ask your Pardon, Sir, I thought my Lady had been here. [*Going.*

Court. Hold, pretty Mrs. *Neceſſary*——I muſt have a Word or two with you.

Nec. I ſhou'd be glad to do you any Pleaſure, and ſhall always be ready whenever you pleaſe to make uſe of me.

Court.

Court. Faith, my Dear, you are very pretty, [*Kisses her.*] 'Sdeath how wantonly her Eyes talk? [*Aside.*

Nec. Lard, you are the ſtrangeſt Man—Is this all your Buſineſs?

Court. No, my Dear, I want to have a little Diſcourſe with you about your Lady.

Nec. Look you, Sir, Lawyers and Chamber-Maids, like *Balaam's* Aſs, never ſpeak unleſs they ſee an Angel.

Court. Wiſely obſerv'd. There's your Fee. [*Gives her Money.*

Nec. Ay, marry, Sir, this is ſomewhat, but to plead a Cauſe in *Forma Pauperis*, is the Devil.

Court. Well, Mrs. *Neceſſary*, I muſt have your Aſſiſtance this Night in a Deſign, which I have laid, to carry your Lady; in which, if I ſucceed, I'll make thoſe two Guineas two hundred.

Nec. Ay, marry Sir, this is bidding like a Gentleman indeed; you may depend upon my Aſſiſtance: Two hundred ſuch Angels as theſe will tempt a Woman even to keep a Secret——Well, you Men are ſtrange Creatures when you are ſet upon a Thing; you ſtick at nothing to compaſs your Deſign; Lying, Perjury, Bribery, and what not——Nay, o'my Conſcience, I believe you'd raiſe the Devil to obtain a Circle. [*A Bell rings.*] Hark, my Lady rings! I can't ſtay to conſult with you now.

Court. Meet me below Stairs a quarter of an Hour hence.

Nec. I will, I will. Farewell. [*Exeunt ſeverally.*

SCENE Covent-Garden.

Enter Col. Manly.

Col. I am afraid my little Riddle has jilted me again: I have waited this half Hour, and no Appearance of a Chair.

Enter two Chair-Men with a Chair.

Chair. Hiſt! hiſt! If your Name be *Manly*, get into this Chair, and ask no farther Queſtions.

Col. Now certainly the Diſcovery draws near. I wiſh at laſt the Riddle proves worth the Trouble of expounding. Certainly ſhe can't be a common Woman, by the

the Caution she takes of preserving her Reputation. Well, for once I'll indulge my Curiosity, tho' it bring me to an old Woman, or what's e'en as bad, an old Acquaintance. [*Gets in.*

Chair. Push on, *Jack*, push on. [*Exeunt with Chair.*

SCENE a Chamber.

Enter Sir Amorous Vainwit, *reading a Letter.*

Sir Amo. Rivet me to the Center, if this is not superlatively fortunate; I cou'd contemplate on these Lines to Perpetuity.

Reads,

Sir, *I am confirm'd you have Wit and Good Nature enough to forgive this uncommon Method I have taken to divulge my Passion; the Effect of your own Charms, which I think as impossible for any Woman to see, and not admire, as to love you, and not declare it. The Condition I am in makes me thus free: I am a Woman of a considerable Fortune, and in my own Hands; but have a Brother who takes the Privilege of his Sex to confine me, being of a Nature so jealous, that he believes Virtue cannot guard it self. I have said enough to let you know I should be glad of my Freedom, which I doubt not but your Wit can easily effect; and if you think my Person and Fortune a Reward, you may trust to your own Charms for your Security. If you will go immediately into the Piazza, there shall be a Chair to conduct you to me. Yours,*

SILVIA.

This is an Intrigue indeed, and worth the following—— Egad the Women are strangely taken with this Person of mine. I believe I must marry at last in my own Defence——Sirrah, if I am not at Home by Twelve, you need not expect me. Now for *Silvia*.

SCENE Miranda's *Chamber.*

Enter Betty, *leading in Col.* Manly.

Bet. Stay here a while, and I, or better Company will wait on you immediately. [*Exit.*

Col.

Col. So, I have travell'd a fine Way to Night, thro' all the Allies, Lanes, and By-ways in Town——I am brought here to wait on my little Fairy, and for ought I know I may be in the World in the Moon, only Darkneſs ſeems a Contradiction to that——Pray Heav'n, where ever I am, it may prove an Orb of Happineſs, and that this Adventure may end as well as it begun, in a pleaſant Intrigue with a fair young Lady. [*Singing within.*] What do I hear?——Nay, now I believe I am in a Region among the Deities indeed, and this Muſick is a Preparation for the thrilling Pleaſures I am brought here to enjoy——Methinks they ſtay too long——Now am I flush'd with Expectation of my approaching Bliſs——I dare not peep, for fear of being expell'd my *Eden* for ſearching after too much Knowledge——'oft a little! the dark Scene of Mortality opens, and my charming Spirit appears in her little Paradiſe.

Enter Miranda *and* Betty *with Candles.*

So! in what Syllables ſhall I accoſt her? What a Pox! Have I never a Speech out of a Play to complement her? Then her Beauty muſt inſpire me with ſome *Extempore* Poetry I think.

Mir. Is not your Patience tir'd, Sir?

Col. No, Madam:

As Rural Swains expecting wait the Dawn,
And view with Gladneſs the approaching Morn;
So at your Radiant Charms, inſpir'd I gaze,
Chear'd by your Eyes, like bright Aurora's Rays.

Mir. Sir, inſtead of returning ſo courtly a Compliment in the ſame Poetick Strain, I have at preſent ſo little of the Vanity of my Sex, as to be offended at your Flattery; for you have neither the Conſtancy of a Rural Swain, nor my Eyes the Brightneſs of *Aurora*'s Rays; therefore your Words ſpeak rather the Panegyrick of a Poet, than the Plain-dealing of a Soldier.

Col. Madam, what I have ſaid is Truth, and therefore no Flattery; and as for my Conſtancy, I have had a continual Fit of it ever ſince I ſaw you; and for your Charms, they are brighter than *Aurora* in my Eyes, and

I am as little skill'd in the Art of Flattery, as your Beauty is above the Reach of it.

Mir. Nay, now your Genius soars so high, that I assure you my humble Wit cannot come up to it with an Answer.

Col. Nor mine, Madam, to return your Raillery at present, but pray what Usage am I to expect?

Mir. The same which you intended half an Hour ago for me, Sir.

Col. Faith, with all my Heart, Madam: I am glad to hear it. Come let's retire then. [*Knocking without.*

Mir. I am betray'd! 'tis my Brother——Sir, I beg you'd hide your self or I'm undone.

Col. Hide my self! yes truly, 'tis very likely I shou'd and not know where I am——A Pox on my unlucky Fortune.

Mir. Hark! they knock again!——*Betty*, conduct him to my Closet in my Dressing-Room. [*Ex.* Betty *and* Col. So, now he's gone, I'm safe——Well, an Intrigue requires as much Policy to keep it from being found out, as a Conspiracy: The least contrary Motion disorders the whole Frame of it, and brings it to the very Brink of Discovery.

Enter Sir Amorous *and* Betty.

Betty. This is my Lady, Sir.

Sir Amo. Strike me crooked if she is not a most Angelick Creature. Madam, may I have Leave to hope these Lines were wrote by the fair Hands of so superlative a Beauty? Ha! Madam.

Mir. Sir, they were——and I hope you will interpret——Be pleas'd to sit——I say Sir——

Sir Amo. Madam!——

Mir. I say Sir, my Conduct in this Affair may prejudice my Reputation in your Opinion: Therefore my present Task must be to justify that, before I can pretend to a Place in the Heart of so accomplish'd a Gentleman, which, I must with blushing own, I shou'd esteem my greatest Happiness.

Sir Amo. O Gad, Madam, you confound me with your supererogatory Indulgence; tho', at the same Time, I must say, your Manner of Proceeding is very Novel; but

but had my Eyes before this Time been bleſt with the benign Proſpect of your invincible Charms, your Beauty wou'd not have only ſav'd your Bluſhes upon this Occaſion, but inſpir'd my Tongue with all the Efficacy of moving Eloquence to beg with Importunity the proffer'd Bleſſing.

Mir. I thank you, for your kind Indulgence of my Paſſion: even Flattery in Love is welcome: But, Sir, that my Reputation is yet unſully'd, let this declare: I am a Widow, my Husband was an *India* Merchant, where, about three Years ſince, he dy'd, but not before he had acquir'd an Eſtate of Two Thouſand Pounds a Year, of which he left me ſole Miſtreſs, with the Addition of Fifteen Thouſand Pounds; the ſtrong Affection I had for my Native Country, ſoon after my Husband's Death, brought me to *England*, where, ever ſince, my Brother has uſurp'd a Power of confining me, making this Houſe my Priſon, under a Pretence to prevent my marrying to a Diſadvantage; but rather, I believe (by his barbarous Uſage) to drive me into Deſpair, that he may the eaſier become Maſter of my Fortune: He is ſo jealous of me, that it wou'd be immediate Death for any Man to look at me with the leaſt Deſire of any farther Intimacy.

Sir Amo. I hope, Madam, he's not in the Houſe now——Not that I ſhou'd fear an Army of Brothers in ſuch a Cauſe——Your Beauty wou'd give Succeſs to my Endeavours, and egad, Madam, I fence as well as any Man in *Europe*.

Mir. No, Sir, he's out of Town, and won't come Home to Night. My Servant he has made my Keeper; but I have brib'd her to my Intereſt——Now, Sir, give me leave to proceed, for Time is precious, and my Deſire of Liberty gives my Tongue this Boldneſs——I ſaw you on *Sunday* at St. *James*'s Church, when your Charms, like ſubtle Lightning flaſht thro' my Eyes, and took Poſſeſſion of my Heart; ever ſince I have been contriving to make known my Paſſion to you, and obtain a happy Interview; which, by the Force of my own Inclination, and my Servant's Avarice, I have this Night accompliſh'd——Your Manner of being brought

here

here was merely Political, that if you refus'd my melting Heart its Wiſhes, my Reputation might be ſafe, and you return'd the ſame Way you came.

Sir Amo. Egad ſhe'd make an excellent City Wife—one wou'd think ſhe had been brought up in *Spain* or *Portugal* by her ſecure Manner of Intriguing. [*Aſide.*

Mir. Now, Sir, if you think me worthy to be your Wife (I muſt ſpeak it) procure me my Liberty this Night; I have both a Licenſe and a Parſon ready in the Houſe, and my Maids will be Witneſſes.

Sir Amo. This is ſomething extraordinary. She may be a Bite faith. [*Aſide.*] Why really, Madam, Marriage is a Thing I have not much thought of as yet; not but that I ſhou'd conclude my ſelf infinitely happy in the Poſſeſſion of ſo fine a Woman—But—

Mir. Come, Sir, perhaps you may think this ſome Impoſition on you, but I'll quickly remove that doubt—There, Sir, accept theſe Bills: they are from the Bank, and worth Ten Thouſand Pounds, only an Earneſt of the Fortune you may command. [*Gives him Bills.*

Sir Amo. Ha! egad they're right. Pray Heav'n this mayn't prove a Dream at laſt. Faith I can hardly credit my Senſes. [*Aſide.*

Mir. You ſeem ſurpriz'd, Sir. What new Objection?

Sir Amo. Objection, Madam! none cou'd be excogitated after ſo conſummate a Proof of Love and Merit; and if any Diſorder is perceptible in my Looks, it proceeds from a puſilanimous Apprehenſion of any croſs Accident that a malevolent Fate ſhou'd produce, to exclude me from the Heaven of your Embraces.

Mir. Then Sir, be pleas'd to ſecure them Bills in your Pocket-Book. [*Putting the Bills in his Book.*

Sir Amo. This is a moſt prodigious Adventure, and notwithſtanding all my Vanity and Boaſting, I never knew any Woman before that had Senſe enough to be commonly civil to me: Therefore I'll take Fortune by the Hand while ſhe's in this ſmiling Humour, marry the Lady this Minute, and publiſh my Succeſs over the whole Town before to morrow Morning——Her Fortune I am ſure of, her Beauty is invincible, and her Underſtanding is conſpicuous, in chuſing me for a Husband—

bind——Dear Charmer, you muſt indulge the Importunity of a Paſſion, which the Corruſcation of your own fair Eyes have created, and your meliſluous Tongue confirm'd: You muſt conſent to make me happy this Night! this Hour! this Minute! My Soul pants for the Exſtatick Bliſs.

Mir. This Rapture blows my Paſſion to a Flame; your Words are no leſs charming to my Ears, than your Beauty to my Eyes.

Enter Betty.

Betty. O Madam! Madam! my Maſter's come to Town, and juſt coming up Stairs.

Mir. My Brother! O Heav'n! what an unlucky Accident's this? What will you do, Sir?

Sir Amo. Lord, Madam, I am the dulleſt Dog at contriving in the World——but, if you pleaſe, Madam, I'll jump out at the Window.

Mir. That were to endanger your precious Life——*Betty* ſtep into the Cloſet, there is a Night-Gown and Petticoat of mine, fetch it out, and put it upon him——[*Exit* Betty.] You muſt conſent to this Diſguiſe, for if my Brother ſees you, you're certainly a dead Man.

Enter Betty *with the Cloaths.*

Betty. Here, Sir, be pleas'd to put on the Petticoat.

[*Dreſſes him.*

Sir Amo. Sure I am the moſt unlucky Dog upon the Earth! I am damnably afraid my good Fortune will conclude in a Gudgelling.

Betty. So, Sir, now the Gown.

Sir Amo. Well, I was never made for intriguing, that's certain. I have neither a Head to contrive an Eſcape, nor a Heart to juſtifie a Diſcovery: Nay, what vexes me moſt, I am ſo curſed a Coward, that I am not to be kick'd into a little Courage.

Betty. Now, Sir, for the Headcloaths. I vow you'll make a pretty Sort of a Laſs.

Mir. Hark! I hear my Brother coming. Say any Thing to bring your ſelf off.

Enter the Butler *dreſs'd like a Gentleman, booted.*

But. So, Siſter, have you ſupp'd?

Mir. No, Brother; nor I have not order'd any Thing,

becauſe you told me you ſhou'd ſtay at *Hampton-Court* all Night.

But. So I had, but Sir *John* and his Brother ſent an Excuſe for their not coming, ſo I e'en came Home to Night. How now! who is this Woman?

Sir Amo. Sir, I came about a little Buſineſs to my young Lady.

But. No Perſon can have Buſineſs with my Siſter, who does not think fit to acquaint me with it. What are you, Woman?

Sir Amo. Pray Sir don't be in a Paſſion. I am——I am, you muſt know I don't know what the Devil to ſay to him. My Fear puts a Stop to my wonted Capacity of Lying. [*Aſide.*

But. I ask you, Woman, what you are?

Sir Amo. Why Sir, I am a Midwife.

But. A Midwife! what Buſineſs can my Siſter have with a Midwife?

Sir Amo. O Lord! that's true——What a damnable Thought was that? I might as well have ſaid I was a Fish-Wife——I ſhall certainly be diſcover'd. [*Aſide.*

But. A Midwife! impoſſible! But Zoons, tell me what you are, or——

Sir Amo. O dear Sir, you'll put me into Fits if you ſtorm at this rate;——but excruciate me Sir if——

But. Excrutiate the Devil——

Sir Amo. Upon the Veracity of a Gentlema—Woman, I am really and categorically a Midwife.

But. A Midwife! no, rather one to prepare Work for a Midwife, a Pimp, a Pander! O Siſter, Siſter, is this the Care you have of your Honour? Do Women uſe to wear Mens Shoes? But I'll reward this Meſſenger of Lewdneſs?—— [*Beats him.*

Sir Amo. O help! Murder! Murder! Is this Uſage for a Gentleman—Help! help! the Devil take the hindmoſt. [*Runs off.*

Mir. Ha, ha, ha! This is a pretty ſevere Puniſhment upon the Fool. I aſſure you *Tom*, you have perform'd your Part very well.

But. Your humble Servant, Madam. I am glad it was in my Power to ſerve you; but indeed, to tell you the

the Truth, Madam, I always go about Miſchief with a good Will——My Father was a Pettyfogger, and I have a natural Inclination to it.

Mir. Betty, you muſt go into the next Room, and purſue the Adventure, while I prepare *Clarinda* for the Marriage. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Sir Amorous *in the Balcony.*

Sir Amo. So, I have at laſt found out a Balcony—— Ha! 'tis to the Street; that's fortunate enough—I'll e'en take a Leap in the Dark, and ſo happy be lucky ſay I. [*Leaps out, and hangs upon a Hook, by his Petticoats.*] Gadſo! what now?——'Sdeath I'm faſten'd to a Hook, and can't reach the Balcony to free my ſelf.

Enter Betty *in the Balcony.*

Betty. Sure his Fear has not carry'd him out of the Balcony head-foremoſt! Ha! by all that's miſchievous our unfortunate Knight-Errant, is hung faſt by the Petticoat——He's ſafe enough for one while. Now does my good Nature incline me to improve this Accident for my Lady's Diverſion; I muſt ſend *Tom* to him once more. [*Exit.*

Sir Amo. Sure ſome malevolent Star reign'd at my Nativity! What a Diſappointment have I met with to Night, to be hung up by the Middle like the Sign of the *Fleece*——If I ſhou'd be diſcover'd in this unfortunate Situation of my Affairs, I ſhou'd become the Scorn of the Ladies, and the Jeſt of the whole Town.

Enter the Butler, *and a Footman with a Flambeaux, who ſtands juſt under Sir* Amorous.

Ha! the Door opens! What will become of thee, poor Sir *Amorous*.

But [*Speaking to ſome within.*] Beſure ſecure all the Windows——I'll lock this Door, and take the Key with me——Ha! there's ſomething in the Keyhole.

Sir Amo. O this Son of a Whore will roaſt me alive with his damn'd Flambeaux.

But. So, 'tis lock'd at laſt, light to the *Mitre*. [*Exeunt.*

Sir Amo. To the Devil I hope——Egad I'm glad they're gone; I muſt have ſqueak'd for my Life if that Rogue had ſtood there much longer.

Enter Betty *in the Balcony.*

Betty. I have ſearch'd all the Rooms and can't find him: He certainly muſt have leap'd this Balcony——My poor Miſtreſs will run diſtracted.

Sir Amo. O my Dear art thou there? Prithee excogitate ſome Method to relieve me, for I am unfortunately hung here between Heaven and Earth.

Betty. Bleſs my Heart! you frighted me. What, are you faſtned?

Sir Amo. Faſtned! Yes, yes, I am faſtned, like a Monkey, by the Loins.

Betty. Here, Sir, lay hold on the End of this Handkerchief, and I'll endeavour to pull you up, till you can catch hold of the Banniſters. [*She pulls him up.*

Sir Amo. Hoa up!——ſo, I have got Footing again, tho' I cannot ſay upon ſafe Ground.

Betty. My Miſtreſs will be overjoy'd to ſee you Sir:—and now there is no Fear of her Brother——He'll be engag'd for two or three Hours at leaſt, and by that Time you may be marry'd, and out of the Reach of his Reſentment.

Sir Amo. Dear Child, I am eternally oblig'd to thee, and I hope this Intrigue will end more fortunately than it begun. [*Exeunt.*

The End of the Fourth ACT.

ACT V. SCENE *a Chamber.*

Enter Miranda, *Sir* Amorous *in Women's Cloaths, follow'd by* Betty.

Mir. DEAR Sir *Amorous*, 'tis impoſſible for Imagination to conceive the Concern I have been under for your unfortunate Diſcovery, which might have depriv'd me of the moſt valuable Bleſſing of my Life.

Sir Amo. But now, Madam, that obnoxious opake Cloud is diſſipated, and Fortune

once more has plac'd us under the Sun-shine of Opportunity, we ought to make the most judicious Advantage of it we can.

Bet. I think, Madam, the Gentleman intimates very wisely, I have got a License in my Pocket, and a Parson in the Pantry: What hinders now but that you prepare for a short Grace, and fall too while your Stomachs are in good Humour: When the Business is once over, you may bid Defiance to all Brothers.

Mir. I have no other Way to make Reparation for your Sufferings to Night: *Betty*, you may bring Sir *Amorous* his Cloaths. [*Exit* Betty.] How I blush to think my Necessity shou'd oblige me to conceal so fine a Gentleman under so mean a Disguise——

Sir Amo. Oh Madam! Love has occasion'd a Thousand such Metamorphosis; *Achilles* obscur'd his Valour under a Petticoat, for the Love of a fair Mistress. The Mighty *Hercules* once put on an Apron, and for Love was whipt at a Spinning-Wheel——*Jupiter* himself has submitted to Disguises for to carry on his Amours.

Enter Betty *with Sir* Amorous's *Cloaths.*

Bet. Come, Sir, strip, strip——and put on your own Cloaths. I have given the Doctor Notice, his Pipe and his Bottle are just out, and he'll be ready for you in an Instant. [*He pulls off the Women's Cloaths, and just as he's in his Shirt, the Butler breaks open the Door and enters.*

Sir Amo. Dear Mistress *Betty*, I will make you a grateful Acknowledgment for your Trouble——Ha! What the Devil's here?

But. O vile Wretch! Have you got your Paramour with you again? Ha! and naked too! O thou vile Prostitute!——But thus I'll revenge my injur'd Honour.

Mir. holding him. Oh, pray Sir, recal this dreadful Resolution, and hear me Speak.

Sir Am. looking about. No Loophole to escape at——egad I'll try if I can climb a Chimney. [*Runs up the Chimney.*

But. Ha! Are you so nimble? I may chance to fetch you down before you get to your Journey's End, as expeditious as you are——Here, *Peter*, bring me my great Gun——I'll send a leaden Argument or two after

you to perſwade you to return: Why *Peter*, I ſay, bring me my great Gun. [*Looking up the Chimney.*

Sir Amo. in the Chimney.] Oh! for Heav'ns ſake countermand the Man with the great Gun, and I'll ſurrender at Diſcretion.

But. Quickly come down then, or I fire after you at once. [*Still peeps.*

Sir Amo. Oh, hold your Hand, and I'm with you in an Inſtant. Odſo! I have almoſt broke my Legs.

[*Tumbles down the Chimney all black.*

But. Now, Sir, what can you ſay to juſtifie or excuſe your villainous Deſign upon the Honour of my Family.

Sir Amo. Really, Sir, I am at preſent under ſuch a Confuſion, that I know not well how to exhibit a proper Anſwer to your Accuſation; but when you know my Name and Quality, I doubt not but you'll think more favourable of my Deſigns.

But. Pray, Sir, make me acquainted with 'em both, and quickly too, or——

Sir Amo. My Name is *Amorous Vainwit*, Knight, I have a good Eſtate in the County of *Surrey*, which, with the Affection I bear your Siſter, may render me worthy your Favour——And I aſſure you, Sir, my Intentions are honourable.

But. That will admit of a Doubt; but if you are honourable, you may ſtand any Trial: You muſt excuſe me, if, after what I have ſeen, I can't credit your Narration, but muſt defer your Examination 'till to Morrow Morning——In the mean Time, you muſt be contented to remain a Priſoner in this Room——Madam, I command you to your Chamber——Theſe Cloaths I muſt ſecure 'till Morning——*Betty*, put out all the Lights in the Houſe, and go immediately to Bed, the Key of this Room I ſhall ſecure in my Pocket——

[*Exeunt with the Lights all but Sir* Amo.

Sir Amo. Oh! Misfortune unparalell'd——Why, this is infinitely worſe than being hung by the Loins at a Balcony: Rivet me to the Centre, if ever I was ſo embarraſs'd ſince my firſt Entrance into humane Nature; I muſt certainly be in a curſed Condition; well, 'tis a Happineſs I am left to conſole my Misfortune in the Dark,

Darkly, for a Candle and a Looking-Glass in the Room, would be preſent Death.

Enter Betty *with an old red Waſtcoat, and Sir* Amorous's *Wig, leading in* Clarinda.

Hark! I hear the Door unlock, ſome Comfort, Fortune, I beſeech thee.

Bet. Sir *Amorous!* Sir *Amorous!*

Sir Amo. Ay, here I am, almoſt ſtarv'd to Death with Cold.

Bet. I conſider'd your Condition, and have brought you an old Waſtcoat that belongs to one of the Footmen, and your Wig, which my Maſter dropt upon the Stairs. [*She puts them on.*

Sir Amo. This is an Obligation I can never return; but how got you in?

Bet. Why, the Key of my Chamber-Door fitted this Lock; here is my Lady with me——Speak to him, Madam. [*Aſide to* Clarinda.

Clar. You may ſee, Sir, what Difficulties true Love dare encounter with——We'll yet be happy in Spight of Fortune and my Brother; the Parſon is ſtill below Stairs, and may do his Office; you muſt diſpenſe with its being perform'd in the Dark, ſince you are acquainted with the Neceſſity.

Sir Amo. Oh, Madam, there needs no Light where you are, the radiant Luſtre of your Eyes would eclipſe the Sun.

Bet. Come, come Sir, and Madam, defer theſe fine Speeches till a better Opportunity——and go and talk with the Parſon. So now for the Colonel. [*Unlocks the Cloſet Door, puſhes 'em both in.*] I muſt remove him a little farther off for the Preſent, I think I had as good beſtow him in his own Lodging till this Wedding is over——Sir, Sir——[*Enter Colonel*] give me your Hand, amd follow me.

Col. This is a pretty Scene of Enchantment, where the Devil can this all End—— [*She leads him out.*

SCENE Changes to Col. Manly's *Lodgings.*

Enter thorough the private Door Betty *leading the* Colonel.

Bet. Stay here Sir, till I come to you [*Exit the ſame way*

Col.

Col. This is the oddeſt Adventure I ever met with, I ſuppoſe by and by I ſhall feel the Point of ſome jealous Cuckold's Sword at my Throat.

Enter Aſpin *drunk.*

Aſp. This Citron-Water is admirable Stuff; I have ſlept the Fire and Candle out; and I preſume my Maſter will hardly come home to Night, therefore I'll e'en grope my Way to his Bedchamber, and take a Nap 'till Morning.

Col. I think I hear ſome Body; I hope 'tis my little Emiſſary to conduct me back to the Lady.

Aſp. As a Proof of my Courage, I can venture into this Room that's haunted, and without a Light too; for ſince I have arm'd my ſelf with *Richard Baxter's* Dram of Comfort to a faint-hearted Sinner, I can bully the Devil.——

Col. Oh, 'tis ſhe——are you come, my Dear, I have waited with no ſmall Impatience——

Aſp. Oh, Lord, there's a Voice——and all my Reſolution is vaniſh'd at once: If I had but Courage now, wou'd I ſpeak to this Spirit, perhaps here is ſome Money hid, and it can't reſt 'till it be diſcover'd.

Col. Where are you, my Dear——[*Feels about, lays hold on* Aſpin, *then ſtarts back, and draws his Sword.* Damme, what's here, a Man?

Aſp. Oh! how my Heart akes, this is certainly a Thief, I'll e'en put my Conduct upon tryal, for I dare not truſt to my Courage.

Col. What are you? Speak this Minute, or my Sword's in your Guts;——Inform me what Houſe this is, and who's the Maſter of it; but ſpeak ſoftly, leaſt we are over-heard.

Aſp. Ay, ay, 'tis certainly a Thief; my Courage does really fail me, and I muſt frighten him by Stratagem——the Maſter of this Houſe is the Devil, he keeps Company with the Lady *Fairy*, and I am their chief Butler.

Col. What a-pox, have they thruſt me into a dark Room with a Madman?——I'll humour him a little——Prithee what's thy Maſter's Name?

Aſp. He is vulgarly diſtinguiſh'd by the Title of Colonel *Manly.*

Col.

Col. The Devil he is——*Aſpin.*

Aſp. That's my Name——Maſter is it you? Why how came you here?

Col. Nay, if you go to that, What Art Magick brought you here? Did you follow my Chair, and ſlip into this Apartment to hide your ſelf?

Aſp. Follow your Chair! My poor Maſter has been Drinking I perceive: Pray Sir, which way did you return here ſince you went out?

Col. Why, you are drunk you Raſcal!

Aſp. Poor Man, he's prodigiouſly overtaken——but pray, Sir, which way did you come in? I'm ſure I had the Key of the Room in my Pocket.

Col. Room! Why what Room is this?

Aſp. Even your own Sir, or the Devils.

Col. What do you mean, we are a great Way from Home.

Aſp. Why then the Devil has carried the Room through the Air by Enchantment.

Col. You have a mind to make me looſe my Senſes——

Aſp. Ay, poor Gentleman, t'other Bottle had done the Buſineſs——

Col. [*feeling about*] Ha! This is certainly the Door of my Room——Which way ſhou'd I come hither——Certainly we are under the Power of Enchantment——You Raſcal, I'll teach you to be drunk when I am out of the Way——Why have not you a Light.

Aſp. Why, really Sir, I took a Nap by the Fire-ſide, ſo at laſt I wak'd, Sir——And I ſaw I was in the Dark, Sir——But the People of the Houſe are up, Sir——If you pleaſe I'll go and fetch a Candle——

Col. No Matter, ſtay here——I'll fetch one my ſelf——

[*Exit and locks the Door.*

Aſp. O dear! What, has he lockt the Door——Gad my Heart akes——Either my Maſter is plaguy Drunk, and does not know what he ſays, or elſe the Devil has been very buſie.

Enter Betty *at the ſecret Door, leading in Sir* Amorous.

Bet. Stay here till my Lady has put on her Night-cloaths, and then ſhe'll come and conduct you to her Bed-Chamber——but be ſure make no Noiſe.

Sir Amo. No, no; I'll be as ſtill as a Lover hid in a Lady's Cloſet, when the leaſt Noiſe wou'd alarm the Husband, and make his Horns viſible.

Bet. Now for the Colonel.—— [*Feeling about lays hold of* Aſpin. What are you aſleep, Sir?——you are a dull Lover indeed——Come Colonel, my Lady has got rid of all her Company at laſt.

Aſp. Ha! a Woman's Hand, and a moiſt one, that's no ill Sign——my Maſter has ſome damn'd Intrigue on Foot, which he durſt not truſt me with, ſhe takes me for my Maſter: I'll e'en ſupply his Place, and that way let my ſelf into the Secret—— [*Aſide.*

Bet. Come away, Sir; but don't ſpeak a Word for your Life.

Aſp. No, no; I'll be ſilent as a Lawyer before he receives his Fee.

Sir Amo. Well it is a ſufficient Conſolation to me, for [*Exeunt* Aſp. *and* Betty *through the private Place.*
this Night's ſufferings, to think I have concluded 'em ſo fortunately, in the Marriage of ſo rich and beautiful a Woman—— [*Col.* Manly *unlocks the Chamber-Door, enters with a Candle, Sir* Amo. *ſeeing him, ſtands amazed in a Corner.*

Col. Come ye drunken Sot, take the Candle and light me to Bed; and if ever you are guilty——hu——what gone—ſure 'tis impoſſible. [*Looks about, ſees Sir* Amo. Ha! What the Devil are you?

Sir Amo. Ha! Col. *Manly*, as I hope for Immortality I thought I had been—Why, where the Devil am I—

Col. In my Lodging, Sir, at preſent——but how you came here, I ſhou'd be very glad to know——

Sir Amo. Came here!——egad, I never was ſo confounded in my Life——Why I came in at the Door, I think.

Col. That's impoſſible; for I have had the Key in my Pocket——how my Man got out, or you came in, I can't imagine——But what the Devil do you do in this Diſguiſe, have you been Maſquerading.

Sir Amo. No, I have been Intriguing——

Col.

Col. What like a Cat a top of the Houſe, and ſo tumbled down the Chimney into my Lodging.

Sir Amo. Why 'faith, Colonel, that's what you may reaſonably ſuppoſe by my Dreſs——

Enter Courtwell.

Court. Dear Colonel, I am glad you are come Home; wiſh me Joy, Joy, Joy, Man!

Col. You have always a great deal in your Looks; 'faith, *Charles*, 'tis impoſſible ever to read a Diſappointment in thy Face; What! are you married?

Court. Not directly turn'd off, but as near it as a Man is being hang'd when the Sheriff cries, Drive away Carman; I am juſt going to leap into the conjugal Gulph.

Col. The Widow has conſented at laſt, Sir.

Court. Conſented! Ha, ha, ha, No 'faith ſhe has not, nor knows nothing of the Matter; ſhe's in Bed, and aſleep too for ought that I know, and not ſo much as Dreams of a Husband. In ſhort, Colonel, finding there was no hope of Succeſs by a regular Siege; I have brib'd the Governour, who has promis'd to open the Gates, and let me in at Midnight.

Col. This is all myſterious, I can't poſſibly conceive what you mean by it.

Court. Mean, why I mean to get ſuch a Generation of Boys and Girls, as ſhall put the weekly Bills out of Countenance, as Sir *Sampſon* ſays: I have laid ſuch a Deſign, that it were the Height of Folly to fear a Diſappointment——Here's the magical Circle, and here's my Indentures for Life——[*Shews a Ring and a Licenſe.*] In ſhort, before the Concluſion of this Night, I'll marry her in Spight of her Teeth, and go to Bed to her——with all her Heart.

Col. 'Faith *Charles*, thou'rt the moſt ſanguine Fellow in thy hopes I ever knew.

Court. Come, Colonel, you muſt go along with me, and aſſiſt me in my Deſign; how now!——what the Devil have you got here! a Baboon in a full-bottom Wig?

Col. Don't you know him! 'tis Sir *Amorous Vainwit.*

Court. Sir *Amorous*! Ha, ha, ha, how the Devil came you in this Pickle? What, forc'd to run up a Chimney

Chimney to ſave your own Bones, and a Lady's Reputation.

Col. Sir *Amorous* and I have met with ſome odd Adventures to Night; we have found our ſelves in this Room together, and neither of us can tell how we got here.

Court. No! Prithee Sir *Amorous*, how came all this about?

Sir *Am.* Why I'll tell you Mr. *Courtwell* as much of the Matter as I really can; I was taken out of the Piazza in *Covent-Garden*, put in a Hackney-Chair, and carry'd ——faith I can't tell where ——but to a Rich Widows Houſe who is paſſionately in Love with me, and to whom I was married within this Quarter of an Hour, and afterwards conducted into her Bed-chamber by the Maid, as the Girl told me: But the Colonel coming in with a Candle, I found (to my great Surprize as well as his) I was in his Lodging.

Col. This Adventure is in every Circumſtance like mine, but the matrimonial Part; I was taken out of the Piazza to Night, put into a Chair, carried a conſiderable Way, and at laſt ſet down in a ſtrange Houſe; where I had not been long, before a beautiful young Lady came to me, with whom I had not diſcours'd five Minutes, but we were alarm'd by the unexpected approach of her Brother; upon which the Lights were put out, and I was conducted in the Dark by the Maid into another Room, where I preſently was ſurpriz'd by the Voice of my Man *Aſpin*, who told me I was in my own Lodging, but which Way I came here, I am confounded to think; my Man being Drunk, I went down to the Maid of the Houſe for a Light; lock'd *Aſpin* in the Room; but when I return'd with a Candle, my Man was vaniſh'd, and Sir *Amorous* left in his Place.

Court. Egad I'll lay my Life theſe are ſome of my Siſter's Tricks——for all this muſt certainly be done by the Help of ſome private Door, and now I call it to mind, my Brother *Tom* (who is now at Sea) told me formerly of one which he had made through his own Chamber for the Conveniency of viſiting a Gentleman's Wife who then liv'd in your Houſe.

Col.

Col. It muſt be ſo, then——but I can ſee no Appearance of one in the Wainſcot.

Court. Perhaps it may be viſible on the other Side only: Stay here but two Minutes, I'll go into my Siſter's Dreſſing-Room, which joins to this, and try if I can make any Diſcovery.

Sir. Amo. If he finds a Trap Door there, I may be in Hopes to come to a ſpeedy Knowledge of my Wife.

Col. But Sir *Amorous*, was you really marry'd to Night?

Sir Amo. Or elſe may the Brilliant of my Countenance for ever labour under this fatal Eclipſe.

Col. But how came you in this damn'd dirty Condition?

Sir Amo. The Narration wou'd be too prolix for the ſmall Duration of this Opportunity; but when my Eyes are once more bleſs'd with the benign Proſpect of my fair Bride, I'll tell you the whole Adventure.

Enter Courtwell *thro' the private Door.*

Court. Ha, ha, ha, the Riddle is expounded Colonel; now you know which way your inviſible Miſtreſs went——Come, come, make no Words, but let us go and ſurprize 'em their own Way——and then to the Widow, who now, Colonel, I dare tell you, lodges in the very Houſe with my Siſter.

[*Exeunt thro' the private Door.*

SCENE changes to Miranda's *Chamber.*

Enter Miranda *with a Candle.*

Mir. So! Now this Marriage is over, I may have Leiſure to talk to the Colonel——Poor Sir *Amorous*! I can't help laughing, to think how his Vanity will be mortify'd, when he finds who 'tis he has marry'd—— Well, 'tis a Puniſhment due to his impudent Boaſting; How, now, *Betty*, whom have you brought here?

Enter Betty *leading in* Aſpin.

Bet. Bleſs me, Madam! I'm ſurpriz'd at the Blunder I have made!——I ſwear——I took him in the Dark, for the Colonel!

Aſp. And why not, Mrs. *Combbruſh*?——Egad ſhe's

a clever Sort of a Woman——Ay, Maſter, Maſter, I've found you out faith——Egad, I'll e'en ſay ſomething that's pretty to her my ſelf——Madam, Madam.

Mir. How came you to bring this drunken Fellow here?

Aſp. By mere Accident, I believe, Madam——But however, Madam, I hope in the whole you'll have no Reaſon to repent the Miſtake, for you know, Madam, there's an old Proverb, which ſays, Joan *is as good as my Lady in the Dark*, according to that, why mayn't *Roger* be as good as his Maſter?

Mir. The Fellow is going to make Love to me, as I live!

Aſp. Why, Madam, there is no Difference betwixt a Colonel and a Foot Soldier; and I have known a common Man do as good Service at a Breach as an Officer.

Enter Courtwell, *Colonel* Manly, *and Sir* Amorous, *out of the Cloſet.*

Mir. Ha! bleſs me, which way came you all in my Cloſet?

Court. Oh! Don't be frighted Siſter, we got there by the Help of a private Door, through which a certain young Lady has made many Excurſions to play at Riddle-me-Riddle——But here are two Gentlemen, the one comes to make Enquiry after a Wife which he has got here, and the other after a Heart he has lately loſt; I ſuppoſe you can give him Tidings of that.

Col. Were you the little Fairy, the lovely Shadow which haunted me——I am a Riddle, expound me and take me, that was your Promiſe, Madam, and here I ſtand to claim it.

Court. Come Siſter, I read a kind of Compliance in your Looks, but I'll ſave your Bluſhes, by giving you to him by the Authority of a Brother——There, Colonel, take her, you are equally Mad, and fit for one another.

Sir Amo. Now the Myſtery is open, and from my Mouth you may both hear your Diſappointment—Know then, Sir, you have no Power to beſtow ſo rich a Gift, nor you, Sir, to accept it, I being already married to this Lady; now, Colonel, notwithſtanding my Vanity, and

and your prodigious Merit, you are convinc'd the Lady has had a quite different Opinion of us; for it is my good Fortune, in Conſideration to my ſuperiour Merit, to poſſeſs the Subſtance, while you, for your Vanity, like a diſappointed Ixion, have only embrac'd a Shadow, and for your Ambition, are doom'd to the perpetual Wheel of Deriſion.

Col. What does your Ignorance mean?

Sir Amo. What does your Wiſdom think I mean?

Court. How Sir, married to my Siſter?

Sir Amo. It is my good Fortune——I appeal to the Lady for a Confirmation.

Mir. Why really Sir *Amorous*, you have been a conſiderable while in the Dark, and 'tis high Time now to open your Eyes——Know then, Gentlemen, that Sir *Amorous* is not——married to me.

Sir Amo. Bleſs me, Madam! what do you mean! not marry'd!

Mir. Marry'd you are, but not to me, upon my Word:

Sir Amo. Why, Madam, pray recollect, was not I marry'd to you within this Quarter of an Hour?

Mir. No, Sir——[*Enter* Clarinda.] But here is a Lady who was marry'd to you within this Quarter of an Hour——Look on her!——Lord, Sir, you are as Shy, as if ſhe were an old Acquaintance.

Sir Amo. How, *Clarinda!* the Devil, marry'd to her! then I am the moſt miſerable Dog the Sun ever ſhone upon.

Court. Prithee Siſter ſolve this Riddle:

Sir Amo. Ay, dear Madam, do me the Favour to let me know how all this came about?

Mir. Why then Sir, thus it was:——*Clarinda* was drinking a Diſh of Tea with me this Afternoon, when my Brother came in, who was recommending you to me for an humble Servant, but ſhe being too well acquainted with your Inconſtancy, in Charity to me, and hoping ſome Redreſs of her Wrongs, inform'd me of your Treachery to her; upon which, in Juſtice to my Sex, and to free my ſelf from the Addreſſes of a Perſon I had no great Opinion of from the Report of my Ac-

quaintance, (for I never ſaw you before in my Life.) I was induc'd to ſend you that Amorous Epiſtle, which ſo ſoon brought you to my Houſe, and the better to incline you to an immediate Marriage, I gave into your Hands ſixteen Thouſand Pounds in Bank-Bills, which you know I oblig'd you to put in your Pocket-Book; the Recovery of which, I had contriv'd in the Story of my Jealous Brother, who you may remember interrupted our Amorous Diſcourſe, and occaſion'd you to leave your Coat, with your Pocket-Book in it, to make your Eſcape in a Suit of my Cloaths, and a ſecond Time to retire with Precipitation up the Chimney, which prepared the reaſonable Excuſe for your being marry'd in the Dark to this Lady inſtead of me; ſo you are both beholden to my Invention: She for Juſtice,——and you for a Wife.

Col. Pray Sir *Amorous* who do you think reſembles *Ixion* now?

Sir Am. I'll renounce Womankind, and proclaim War upon the whole Sex!—— And is your Fortune in the *Indies*, my Dear?

Clar. I'd have you go ſee, my Dear.

Sir Am. And ſuppoſe I ſhou'd, my Dear?

Clar. Then perhaps when you return, your Head may be better furniſh'd.——

Sir Am. With Branches of your own planting, I don't doubt my Dear.

Clar. As ſoon as with more Wit, I dare ſay, my Dear.

[*Enter* Neceſſary] *Whiſpers* Courtwell.

Court. I come, ——Gentlemen and Ladies, now I ſhall want your Aſſiſtance, I'd have you follow me as ſoon as poſſible, the Muſick is all ready.——

Col. Sir *Amorous*, you muſt aſſiſt in the Deſign;

Sir Am. O pardon me! what in this Dreſs!

Col. O there will be more Maſqueraders; beſides, you had better your ſelf make a Jeſt of what has happen'd, and that way diſappoint the ill-natur'd Town of doing it for you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE changes to Lady Outſide's *Apartment.*

Enter Col. Manly, *Sir* Amorous, Clarinda, Miranda, Betty, *Singers and Dancers.*

Mir.

Mir. Play, play, play briskly Gentlemen, —— this is her Bed-chamber; I'm reſolv'd we'll have Entrance.—— [*Knocking.*

Enter Neceſſary.

Nec. Bleſs me, Madam! what's the Matter?

Mir. We are come to wiſh your Lady Joy, and throw the Stocking.

Nec. Joy, Madam, of what! why my Lady's juſt gone to Bed.

Mir. I'm ſorry for that, I came on Purpoſe to undreſs her.

Col. But, Madam, tho' you are come too late to perform that Ceremony, —— we'll go in and throw the Stocking.

Mir. Ay, In, In, In, —— [*Forcing in.*

Nec. Lord! Madam! what d'ye mean? You would not have the Gentlemen go into my Lady's Chamber now ſhe's in Bed? [*Exit and ſhuts the Door.*

Mir. Come, come, play again, Gentlemen, [*Here the Muſick plays, and a Song.*] [*Knocking.*] we come to wiſh you Joy, Madam, and are reſolv'd to ſee you to Night in the Arms of your Bridegroom, therefore you had as good open the Door, and let us come in.

Enter Lady Outſide, *as juſt riſen from Bed, and* Neceſſary.

L. Out. Dear *Miranda!* what do you mean by this unſeaſonable Frolick? Your merry Temper, I vow, carries you beyond the Rules of good Manners.

Mir. See what 'tis to have a Husband! what early Hours it makes a Woman keep, a Bed before Eleven.

L. Out. A Husband, nay now you're Rude! What d'ye mean?

Mir. Did you think to ſteal a Wedding? Come, come, we're all come to wiſh you Joy, to have one Dance with you, and then throw the Stocking——Gentlemen, this is my Siſter.

Omn. We wiſh you Joy, Madam! ——

L. Out. Miranda, this is carrying the Jeſt too far, to expoſe me thus before Strangers.

Mir. You know every Body but this Gentleman; and he's my Brother's particular Friend, and I know for his Sake, he's welcome——Come, what does this idle

Bridegroom lie in Bed, and ſuffer his Bride to be thus long from his Arms?

L. Out. Why ſure you are diſtracted! I marry'd! how came you to dream of ſuch a Thing?

Mir. It ſignifies nothing to deny it, Madam, I know, and ſo does all this Company, that you were marry'd to my Brother this very Morning——Come, come, we'll go and fetch him out of Bed. [*Running in.*

L. Out. Hold, *Miranda*! I thought you had more Reſpect to the Decencies of our Sex, than to carry Gentlemen into my Bed-chamber.

Mir. Nay, Siſter, you may ſhut the Door, but poſitively he ſhall get up, or we'll diſturb the whole Neighbourhood.—Muſick, play again, —— [*They play.*] We'll raiſe the Devil, but we'll have him out of your Bed-chamber.

L. Out. I'm ſure you muſt conjure, if you do.—— [*Enter* Courtwell *as from the Bed-chamber, in a Night-Gown, Night-Cap, and Slippers.*] Ha! —— Oh! Heaven! which way got he there?

Omn. Oh! Mr. *Courtwell*, we wiſh you Joy, Joy, Joy.

Court. Gentlemen and Ladies, I'm oblig'd to you for your good Wiſhes, but this is a Compliment I muſt own I could well have ſpar'd, ſince it was the Deſire of my fair Spouſe to keep our Nuptials a Secret —— Come, my Dear, don't be out of Humour, you find 'tis impoſſible to conceal our Marriage any longer, tho' upon my Soul, I can't imagine by what Means they came to know it.

L. Out. Know what, thou baſe impudent Wretch? Art thou not aſham'd.

Court. Not I, as I hope to be ſav'd, Madam; on the contrary, I think my ſelf the happieſt Man on Earth, in the Poſſeſſion of ſo charming a Bride.

L. Out. This is a baſe Confederacy; and you *Miranda*, I can never forgive, who I ſuppoſe are the main Inſtrument in this Deſign, to trick me into a Marriage with your audacious Brother.

Court. Come, come, prithee my Dear, diſperſe theſe unbecoming Frowns, I ſwear you carry the Jeſt too far now.

L. Out.

L. Out. I never ſaw ſo much Aſſurance in any Life; but if it be poſſible to call a Bluſh into that impudent Face of thine, I'll do it.——Here *Neceſſary*, pray do you ſatisfy theſe Gentlemen and Ladies what you know of this Affair, and ſpeak nothing but the Truth I charge you.

Nec. Nay, Madam, you need not give me that Caution, for I never told a Lye in my whole Life.

Court. Ay, Ay, do you hear, *Neceſſary*, tell the Truth now your Lady has given you leave.

Nec. Then I muſt needs ſay——you have wedded and bedded my Lady.

Court. Your Humble Servant, Madam——Strike up Muſick——Gentlemen and Ladies pray know my Wife.

L. Out. This is all a Piece of concerted Villainy to ruin me, but tho' I am a Woman, I have Friends in the World may call you to an Account for this barbarous Impoſition.

[*Going up to her, ſhe turns away from him, and frowns in Contempt.*

Court. Prithee my Dear, don't make your ſelf ſo very Ridiculous, upon my Soul, you'll make me bluſh for your Folly;——come, come, this Humour is impertinent, and I don't like it;——did you think I marry'd you to keep it a Secret from the World?——Know your Duty Madam, and let me be obey'd.

L. Out. Was there ever ſuch Inſolence?

Court. Come, come, I ſay no more——Why what am I ha?

L. Out. An impudent Villain.

Court. How!

L. Out. I have ſaid it, Sir.

Court. Certainly the Woman is diſtracted!

L. Out. Or this will make me ſo. [*Going up to her and Smiling.*

Court. An haſt thou really the Aſſurance to deny being married to me then? Pray Madam will you be pleas'd to tell the Company upon what Account you and I have been in Bed together to Night.

L. Out. In Bed together! Oh! I ſhall burſt with Paſſion, baſe Man. [*Cries.*

Court.

Court. Lord! what obſtinate Creatures theſe Women are, when they can't have their Will.

Col. I'm ſurpriz'd, Madam, you ſhou'd be ſuch an Enemy to your own Reputation, as to perſiſt in denying your Marriage, after what we have ſeen.

L. Out. Why, what have you ſeen, Sir.

Col. We have ſeen you, Madam, come out of your Chamber, at Eleven a-Clock at Night, as riſen from your Bed, and followed immediately by a luſty young Fellow, whom we reaſonably ſuppoſe, by his Diſabille, and his own Confeſſion, has been your Companion there; ſo if you pleaſe, Madam, you may ſtill deny your Marriage, and by that, give the cenſorious World a Reaſon to ſuſpect your Vertues.

L. Out. What can I do in this Affair?——Sir, Mr. *Courtwell*, pray give me leave to ſpeak a Word with you in private.

Court. Ay, my Dear, with all my Heart.

L. Out. Pray tell me, Sir; do you deſign to perſiſt in this impudent Trick?

Court. Indeed I do Madam.

L. Out. And don't you think you have a great deal of Impudence?

Court. A Sort of modeſt Aſſurance, Madam, fit to carry me thro' ſuch an Undertaking.

L. Out. Why you won't pretend to make me believe you have marry'd me, and been in Bed with me?

Court. No, Madam, you know better, I have only made my Friends believe that——Come Widow, I know you have no deſpicable Opinion of my Perſon, therefore if you wou'd preſerve your Reputation, and avoid the Laughter of your Acquaintance, e'en come into my Deſign at once, and own a Marriage with me; I have a Licence in my Pocket, and a Parſon by my Appointment in the Cloſet, it will be eaſy to make an Excuſe for a Quarter of an Hour, while he does his Office, return to our Friends, have a Dance, and a Bottle, then to Bed, and bid fair for a Brace of Boys that ſhall inherit their Mother's Beauty——(*L. Out.*) and their Father's Modeſty: (*Court.*) Right, Madam, and thus I ſeal the Agreement.

L. Out.

L. Out. There's an irresistable Perswasion in his Lips, and a World of Rhetorick in his Kisses. Don't you expect I shou'd use you Scurvily, if I shou'd consent to marry you?

Court. No, my Dear; I'll do so well by thee, you shall never have Reason to say you were marry'd for your Sins.

L. Out. Well, Gentlemen and Ladies, I find 'tis in vain to deny it any longer, I—am—what shall I say?

Court. I am marry'd—— [*Prompting her.*

L. Out. I am marry'd——I wou'd have conceal'd it for some important Reasons I had, but now I freely own I have dispos'd of my Person by a Lease for Life.

Court. And I'm the Man that shall inhabit the Tenement—— [*Kisses her.*

(*Sings.*) *Her Lips are so balmy sweet,*
Such Magick there is in a Kiss,
That when thus we kindly meet,
I long for the nameless Bliss.

Omn. We wish you Joy, Madam. [*Salute her.*

Sir Amo. Madam, I wish you Joy too, and am sorry I can't shew the Respect I ought: But you'll excuse my Disabille?

L. Out. Pray Sir *Amorous* what's your Meaning for this Disguise?

Mir. He's doing Penance (tho' not in a white Sheet) for some Crimes committed against our Sex, I'll take an Opportunity to tell your Ladyship the whole Affair.

Court. Come, we'll make Use of the Entertainment which our Friends have been so kind to provide for us——You'll give me Leave my Dear to lead you up in a Country-Dance. [*They dance.*] Come my fair Spouse; for thy engaging Charms, I gladly quit the barren Pleasures of the Town, in the Fruition of thy Love! I'll fix my future Happiness:

On Earth we find no Joys so lasting prove,
As the chaste Raptures of Connubial Love.

The End of the Fifth ACT.

EPI-

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. CROSS.

NOW, that we've done our beſt,
[perhaps you'll ſay,
There's nothing New in what
[you've ſeen to Day.
How ſhould an impudent young
[Fop miſcarry,
With a poor Soul that ſwore ſhe ne'er would
[marry?
For by your wicked Rules, you take for good,
Widows ſhould be like Almanacks underſtood:
You read 'em backwards, like a Witches Pray-
[er,
You fear they'll jilt you, if they ſpeak you fair:
And, without caſting Figures, high or low,
You comprehend them when they anſwer, No.

In our Sex, theſe Arts are nothing new,
They're old Examples which we took from you.
You firſt began the War of Oaths and Lies,
And always kept it on with good Supplies:
But theſe you have forſaken ſome Time ſince,
For that more powerful Vertue, Impudence:

A Thing of ſuch infallible Succeſs,
It proſpers only by its Emptyneſs:
You call it Courage, when 'tis dreſs'd in Red,
But yet it ſeldom dies in Honour's Bed:
It changes at the Bar to Eloquence,
Tho' ignorant of Law, and void of Senſe.
'Tis Wit, 'tis Beauty, and 'tis manly Grace,
It mightily ſets off a hideous ugly Face:
A proſperous Folly, that without Pretence,
Still Lords it over Breeding, Wit and Senſe.
When arm'd with this Temptation you aſſail us,
O Cupid! *what will all our Arts avail us!*
In vain our Affectations we apply,
Whilſt you the Force of ſtrong Aſſurance try.

FINIS.